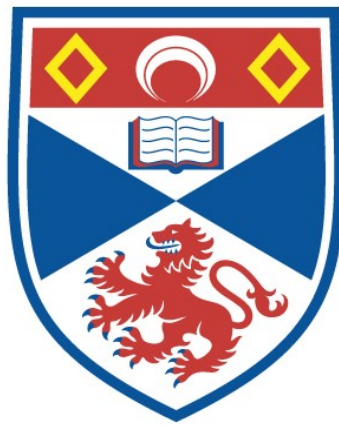


FRENCH RENAISSANCE COMEDY, 1552-1630

Brian Jeffery

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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I.D. McFarlane, M.B.E., M.A., D.U.P.,
Professor of French, University of St. Andrews.

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FRENCH RENAISSANCE COMEDY

1552 - 1630

by

Brian Jeffery



Tm5560



A thesis presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the University
of St. Andrews, June 1967.

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PREFACE

It is just over a hundred years since Emile Chasles published his perceptive and thorough La comédie française de la Renaissance. In that time, both the live theatre and dramatic criticism have adopted new approaches to Renaissance drama, and new facts have been made available. My aim here has been to re-examine the texts and to offer new perspectives on French Renaissance comedy. The field is a small one, on the face of it. But it is large enough to support valid conclusions; moreover, I have cast my net wide.

To present one's work in unified form means calling research temporarily to a halt. But I hope to follow up certain aspects further before turning this thesis into a book; especially the influence of Terence and his commentators, a subject which cannot be properly approached without the sixteenth century texts at hand.

My thanks are due to my supervisor, Professor I.D. McFarlane, for his encouragement and advice over a period of years; to the University of St. Andrews, in particular for grants from the Travel Fund and Research Fund; to the Mermaid Dramatic Society for allowing me to produce Ben Jonson's Alchemist for them; to numerous friends who have read parts of the manuscript and made their

suggestions; to Professor H.W. Lawton; and to Christine Paterson for her speedy and efficient typing of the manuscript.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is about a neglected part of French Renaissance drama: about comedy and the conventions of comedy, seen not only in a comparatively small number of regular comedies, but also in translations and adaptations, dialogues and hybrid farce-comedies, and in aspects of other genres such as tragi-comedy. It is a neglected genre today, and has been so for the past half-century. For England, we have a number of studies, editions of separate authors, and an established series, the Revels Plays, which includes a full complement of comedies of the late 16th and early 17th centuries; whereas in France, the excellent editions of Jodelle's L'Eugène by Professor Balmas, of Turnèbe's Les Contens by Dr. Spector, of the anonymous Les Ramoneurs by Professor Gill, are isolated, and I know of no overall study.

For this reason, I begin with a survey of comedy in France from 1552 to 1630. The various genres that are concerned, different as they may be, and scattered as the evidence is, show a continuity in certain conventions from the Pléiade to the plays of the 1620's: to Corneille's Mélite as well as to the frankly traditional Les Ramoneurs. Moreover, throughout the period certain influences, in particular the importance of the study of Terence in

schools and universities, remained constant. So that a certain pattern may be observed in the relationship between dramatist and audience; and this first part of the study should begin to illuminate that pattern. Most of the facts in this first part are already known, and I claim no great originality for it.

It has been much argued whether or not these plays were produced in their own time. It is my belief that they were, and I hope to have produced some new evidence that this is so.¹ But by now this is something of a dead horse. And for the present purpose it is a red herring. If a reader regards the plays only as literature, the question is irrelevant. If they are regarded as texts for stage production, it is certain from the texts themselves that the authors at least had in mind an idea of the stage which taken in conjunction with other known sources (prints, archives, etc.) can certainly help to tell us something about staging in the 16th century. Finally, in the last analysis, on purely theoretical grounds, the fact that a work is written in dramatic form is certainly justification enough for treating it as such. The second part of the book is therefore given to the question of staging.

The third and principal part of the book studies the

¹ Cf. part II below.

conventions in the plays: that is, the constant features in a relationship between author and audience. First the comic theory of the French Renaissance is examined, because it was certainly known to every educated man in the Renaissance. In 1577 Gerard de Vivre could write:

Amis Lecteurs, chascun scait desja bien que
c'est [sic] que la Comedie, pourtant ne m'amuseray
à la vous deschiffrer en ce lieu ci, à cause,
qu'il y en a tant d'autres qui en ont faict mention.¹

This knowledge of comic theory, gained primarily but not only through the study of Terence in schools and universities, will affect both the attitude of writers towards their plays and the reactions of audiences (and readers) to the plays they saw (and read). Plays, even more than other forms of literature, depend for their effect by their very nature upon a two-way relationship between author and audience. To understand how a play works, you cannot afford to ignore either the audience (as literary critics may be tempted to do) or the dramatist (as theatrical producers may be tempted to do). Comic theory therefore has its importance for the actual stage presentation of these plays, and so I have given a separate chapter to it. It may be pointed out here that

¹ Gerard de Vivre, Comedie de la fidelité nuptiale, Invers, 1577, Aux Lecteurs, f. 2v.

dramatic theory in the Renaissance is not as isolated a form of criticism as dramatic theory could be in later times, from the 17th century to today: in the 16th century a play was a "poème" like other forms of literature, and much criticism not specifically dramatic was applicable to it. Indeed, specifically dramatic criticism in the Renaissance consisted only of a kind of appendix to what the writer had probably already said about literature in general and therefore about drama as well.

Then the plays themselves are examined under different aspects in turn: plot, character and speech. This division is purely for critical convenience. In terms of production, it makes no sense, because for an audience a play can succeed or fail only as a totality, but for the purpose of studying the conventions it should be valid. "Plot" includes the divisions of the play (prologues and epilogues, acts and scenes), the parts of the plot (exposition, dénouement and what lies in between), and their arrangement. The other two divisions cover the use made of character and of verbal conventions respectively. Then I have attempted to sum up the use of conventions in general in these plays, their relation to dramatic and general literary theory of the time, and their function in terms of actual performance.

The books in which the external history of French Renaissance comedy may be found are today long out of print or deal

only with isolated aspects. In the 16th century itself, tragedies were the more often written and published, while in theory, the genre of comedy took second place to its more elevated counterpart. Since the 16th century, critical attention has been focussed rather on tragedy, considered as a more serious and worthwhile genre, and Renaissance comedy has seldom emerged into the limelight of criticism, let alone into that of the modern stage. In the encyclopaedic theatre histories of the 17th and 18th centuries -- by the Frères Parfaict, La Vallière, Lérès, etc. -- the relevant entries are generally quite brief. The 19th century saw the reprinting of most of the comedies, and two general surveys: Emile Chasles' La comédie en France au XVIIe siècle (Paris, 1862), and P. Toldo's "La comédie française de la Renaissance", published in instalments in the Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, IV-VII, 1897-1900. The reprints are variable in quality. Chasles' perceptive and encyclopaedic mind produced a work typical of the best of 19th century criticism, full of insight, clear and forthright. But he is too accepting of the critical notions of his time: the central idea behind his book is an evolutionary one: from the enthusiastic but naïve gropings of the Pléiade we traverse a dimly perceived region before emerging into the full light of day with Corneille. We are reminded, I think, of similar notions about the lyric poetry of the turn of the century. Toldo covers the same ground, in greater

detail, generally with Chasles' faults but without his qualities. Since then, as we shall see, excellent but isolated editions and studies have appeared. One play (the only one that I have heard of) has even reached the modern professional stage: Larivey's Les esprits, in an adaptation by Albert Camus made in 1940, acted in 1946 and remodelled for the 1953 Festival d'art dramatique at Angers.¹

But since Chasles and Toldo, much has been discovered in related fields, and new approaches in criticism adopted. Even Camus' comments on Larivey's play are seen to be quite misguided in the light of recent work: "L'ancien français, les longueurs d'un texte qui se ressent de ses origines improvisées [Les esprits is translated from a commedia erudita, not a comedia dell'arte], deux ou trois situations gratuites [only in terms of 20th century drama] risquaient de faire oublier la richesse et les inventions de cette jolie comédie",² while the way in which he uses Larivey in the first part of L'état de siège (as "Pedro de Lariba") shows his incorrect (though certainly fertile) conception of that author in terms of

¹ Albert Camus, Les esprits, adaptation en trois actes, Paris, 1953.

² Ibid., Introduction.

improvised comedy. Among the more important work in related fields are Professor Duckworth's study of Roman comedy; Jacques Scherer's exhaustive study of the conventions of French 17th century drama; his study of Beaumarchais' comic technique and J.B. Ratermanis and W.R. Irwin's equally close study of the same author; Miss M.C. Bradbrook's study of the conventions of Elizabethan comedy; the work of P. Duchartre, Professor Allardyce Nicoll and others on the commedia dell'arte; and B.L. Joseph on Elizabethan acting.¹ These, to name only a few, have shown that the time is ripe for a fresh approach.

The conventions of French Renaissance comedy, it may be stated now, are seldom original creations by the French authors concerned. They derive especially from the commedia erudita of Ariosto and his successors, from the commedia dell'arte, from Roman comedy, and to some extent from the farces, but they are not identical with the conventions in those sources. For the moment, I am less interested in the precise sources of individual features

¹ G.E. Duckworth, The nature of Roman comedy. A study in popular entertainment, Princeton, 1952; J. Scherer, La dramaturgie classique en France, Paris, 1950; idem., La dramaturgie de Beaumarchais, Paris, 1954; J.B. Ratermanis and W.R. Irwin, The Comic Style of Beaumarchais, Seattle, 1961; M.C. Bradbrook, The growth and structure of Elizabethan comedy, London, 1955; P. Duchartre, La comédie italienne, Paris, 1924; Allardyce Nicoll, The world of Harlequin, Cambridge, 1963; B.L. Joseph, Elizabethan acting, Oxford, 1951.

than in trying to establish what conventions were in use in French Renaissance comedy, and to judge their function and success in terms both of the practical stage and of literary theory. When this is done, we may better appreciate the genre as a whole -- and, more important, individual plays. My own respect for L'Eugène and Les Contens, for example, has gone up considerably in writing this study.

Certainly the fact that the conventions are "unoriginal" should not affect any evaluative judgement we may care to make. The conventions, whether derivative or not, on the one hand enabled writers to produce variations on an accepted framework in exactly the same way as lyric poets wrote variations on the accepted Petrarchan frameworks of the time, and on the other hand in terms of stage technique enabled them to achieve a particular kind of audience-relationship which would otherwise have been impossible. In the Renaissance, too, I do not believe that there is any such thing as an utterly conventional character or form of speech; in every play, however good or bad the play may appear, the function of the conventions is to provide a basis for variation. A parallel could be drawn with the popular music of the Renaissance in France or in England; we never, or almost never, find simple unelaborated versions of L'homme armé, or La belle triquotée, or Go from my window, or Walsingham, because everybody knew these tunes; instead,

we find a number of different, more or less elaborate uses made of these tunes in newly written compositions.

French Renaissance comedies are today neglected. Yet they are not such inferior productions as the space given to them in literary histories would suggest: certainly as good as much of the lyric poetry which is today the object of critical attention, and with the added interest, perhaps, of the dramatic form. The reason seems to be, to a great extent, the unrefuted accusation that the plays are derivative. On this charge, who in the Renaissance shall 'scape whipping? Du Bellay's sonnets, as is well known, are often translations, more or less straightforward, from the Italian. Why should drama suffer an accusation no longer levelled against lyric poetry? Weber, Saulnier and others have shown how often specific 16th century lyric poems, including some of the most widely acclaimed, are adaptations or even translations of Italian models. Grahame Castor has analysed the whole question in the light of ideas of Pléiade theorists¹ — ideas which are in fact concerned with literature in general and not merely with lyric poetry. So that if we are able today to keep our appreciation of a lyric poem independent of our knowledge of its sources, then we ought

¹ Grahame Castor, Pléiade Poetics, Cambridge, 1964.

to be able to keep our appreciation of a play similarly independent.

Let us see what kind of debt is owed to their models by two plays generally held to be imitative: Turnèbe's Les contens and d'Amboise's Nes Neapolitains¹. Edouard Fournier, in his 1871 edition of Les contens, writes:

nulle part l'imitation n'est précise ni directe. Elle tourne autour de la comédie de Turnèbe, l'imprègne et la colore, mais ne la pénètre pas.¹

In his edition of 1964, Norman Spector carefully analyses a number of analogues, of which the following is a typical example:

Rodomont: Que me conseilles-tu, Nivelet?
Dois-je endurer une telle bravade?

(Les contens, I, iv)

Che il capitan Trasilogo patira che gli sia
fatta catanta ingiuria?

(G.B. Della Porta, L'Olimpia, III, iv)

It may be a question of direct borrowing; but quite possibly another Italian play, or some other source entirely, may be the creditor.

They are braggart soldiers speaking; and the braggart soldier is one of the most widespread of Renaissance comic figures. Short of a close examination of the hundreds of extant 16th century Italian comedies,

¹ E. Fournier (ed.), Le théâtre français au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle, Paris, 1871, p. 91.

the question cannot be resolved, so that it is sensible in most cases to speak only of "analogues" and not of "sources". Even where specific borrowing can be established, it is clear that Turnèbe has recast the borrowed material for his own play, as indeed one would hope and expect. Slavish borrowing simply does not come into the question with this play. Les Neapolitaines, too, by its very title, seems to owe much to Italy. Its 19th century editor Fournier again writes:

elle doit être au moins une imitation
assez peu déguisée de la comédie qui nous
échappe, et qui se retrouvera quelque jour.¹

But although we cannot exclude the possibility that a single close source may one day turn up — that Les Neapolitaines¹ may even be a translation — it seems most likely that the play, like Les contes, is a transmutation of borrowed elements into a new individual creation. It is certain that native French elements exist in it: the character of Gaster is not the only reminiscence of Rabelais; the proverbs draw on a rich native store; while the praise of Paris in act V is enthusiastic indeed.

There are, then, a number of different kinds of imitation. Larivey was content with altering Italian proper names to French ones.

¹ Ibid., p. 132.

The process whereby a number of different details are adopted from different Italian (and classical) sources, is one stage further. This can be more readily done in comedy, a form which begins with a wider perspective than does the lyric poetry that Du Bellay was mainly concerned with.¹ Lyric poetry achieves its effect primarily through concentration upon a small area; a play is longer, has a different structure (different types of language put into the mouths of a variety of characters for dramatic purposes), and moreover has to stand up to stage presentation. That is to say, that numerically speaking a lyric poem is likely to have a smaller number of sources than a play. In a play, a certain character may come from one source, the structure of a scene from another, a particular tirade from another, and so on. The possibility of combination is greater. And in fact we find that there are often a great number of sources used in this way; for Turnèbe's Les contents, Dr. Spector finds reminiscences and borrowings from twelve Italian plays and a large number of French and other ones.

The study was begun on the basis of those texts only which are strictly comedies and which are not close translations, namely:

¹ In his Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse, 1549, Du Bellay makes only one reference to the theatre. Cf. H.W. Lawton, Handbook of French Renaissance dramatic theory, Manchester, 1949, pp. xvi and 44.

Etienne Jodelle:	<u>L'Eugène</u>
Jacques Grévin:	<u>La tresorière</u>
Jacques Grévin:	<u>Les esbahis</u>
Remy Belleau:	<u>La reconnue</u>
Jean de la Taille:	<u>Les corrivaux</u>
Pierre de Larivey:	<u>Les esprits</u> (and the other eight plays; although strictly, all nine are close adaptations)
Odet de Turnèbe:	<u>Les contens</u>
François d'Amboise:	<u>Les Neapolitaines</u>
François Perrin:	<u>Les escoliers</u>
Jean Godard:	<u>Les desguisez</u>
Anon (Alexandre Hardy?):	<u>Les ramoneurs</u>
Pierre Corneille:	<u>Mélite</u> ¹

These are comparatively few in number. But they still do not exhaust the list of comedies written or performed in France in the Renaissance. Italian plays written, published or performed there are surely part of the tradition, and we would be as wrong to ignore them as we would be if we ignored, say, Pirandello, in the modern theatre outside Italy. Also, some plays are lost: thus, François d'Amboise is said to have written three comedies besides Les Neapolitaines, but they do not survive.² It was found, too, that a study of conventions (as opposed to a mere historical examination of the plays listed above) simply could not leave aside certain other works: certain translations, dialogues, or tragi-comedies;

¹ Full details of the dates of these plays will be found in the bibliography below.

² See bibliography, sections 3 and 4, for a list of comedies supposed to have been written but now lost.

foreign plays in France, Marc de Papillon's curious Nouvelle tragicomique, plays bordering on farce, iconographical evidence, and so on. All these imply certain kinds of knowledge on the part of the audience or reader, so I have not hesitated to refer to them when it seemed desirable to do so. On the other hand, there are certain comedies to which I seldom refer: Pierre Le Loyer's Néphélococurie because it is isolated from the tradition, the only translation from Aristophanes in the century; or Jean-Antoine de Baif's Bunogue because (unlike his Brave) it is so close a translation that French theatre tradition hardly comes into the question. Larivey's nine plays would have overbalanced the study if all had been dealt with in detail, so in general Les esprits -- which critical opinion since the 16th century seems to have decided, I think rightly, to be the best of them -- has been made to stand as typical of the nine plays. Larivey's reputation should in any case not be allowed, as it sometimes is, to obscure the real merits of, say, L'Eugène or Les ramoneurs.

Existing bibliographies turned out to be inadequate. In particular, there were frequent disagreements on points of detail, especially dates and bibliographical niceties: François d'Anboise's Les Neapolitaines, for example, exists in two different tirages, a fact which one would not gather from modern bibliographical sources. Location of copies, too, was a thorny problem. So the bibliography

at the end is a detailed one and should be a reliable source of reference on such points of detail.



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I THE PLAYS

1. Pléiade comedy: 1552-1574.

When Etienne Jodelle wrote L'Eugène, and when his contemporaries hailed it as the first native French comedy, three forms of the comic theatre were already well known in France: the native farces, the plays of Terence, and Italian comedies. The farces were still firmly alive, though they had passed their heyday fifty years before, at the end of the 15th century: reprints of the old farces still appeared, some new ones were still written, and performances of them were certainly known both in Paris and the provinces, both in Court circles and to the populace. Sebillet in 1548 writes of it as a flourishing genre:

Car le vray suget de la Farce ou Sottie
Françoise sont badinages, nigauderies, et
toutes sotties esmouvantes à ris et plaisir
... Toute licence et lascivie y [dans les
Mimes ou Priapées] estoit admise, comme elle
est aujourd'huy en nos Farces.¹

In short, the farce was one of the most tenacious of theatrical forms and was to flourish continuously side by side with French Renaissance comedy. We shall see how nearly all the Renaissance

¹ Art Poétique Francoys, ed. F. Gaiffe, Paris, 1932,
p. 165.

comedies show one or other of its features: its characters, its particular kind of indecency, its octosyllabic metre; though not its shortness or its almost complete disregard for considerations of time or place.¹ Perhaps by a piece of conscious antiquarianism, perhaps by the sheer merit of the piece, Pasquier's enjoyment of Pathelin even in the time of the Fléiade was like Sir Philip Sidney's enjoyment of Chevy Chase:

je trouvai sans y penser la farce de Maître
Pierre Pathelin, que je lus et relus avec tel
contentement que j'oppose maintenant cet
échantillon à toutes les comedies grecques,
latines et italiennes.²

— while in 1583 Pathelin was still on a reading list in French^{and other}
literature drawn up by Gabriel Chappuys.³

The plays of Terence, and Italian comedies, provided two

¹ On farces in the 16th century, cf. Ian Maxwell, French farce and John Heywood, Melbourne, 1946, and bibliography; H. Lewicka, "Note sur un schéma de farce au XVe et au XVIe siècles", Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, XX (1958), 569-77; B. Cannings, "Towards a definition of the farce as a literary genre", Modern Language Review, LVI (1961), 558-60; B.C. Bowen, Les caractéristiques essentielles de la farce française et leurs survivances dans les années 1550-1620 (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, no. 53), Urbana, 1964.

² E. Pasquier, Recherches de la France, Paris, 1607, p. 1086.

³ L'avare cornu; cf. chapter 2 below.

further models at the time of Jodelle, one more literary than theatrical, the other only intermittent. Professor Lawton has listed the remarkable number of editions of Terence in France in the 16th century, a number due mainly to his use as a set book in schools and universities: his excellent Latinity as well as his lively dramatic style made him especially suitable for the study of rhetoric as well as of other aspects of the dramatic art.¹ Again, in French Renaissance comedies we shall see how elements of his plays are constantly used although his dramatic technique as a whole is never slavishly imitated; while as a background to 16th century dramatic productions the commentaries on Terence — ^{by} both Donatus and his 16th century followers — provide a remarkably constant body of conventions.² As for the Italian comedies, their performances in France at this time such as that of Bibbiena's La Calandria in 1548 at Lyon, or of Alamanni's Flora in 1555 at Fontainebleau were isolated, and we shall see how their influence

¹ H.W. Lawton, Térence en France au XVIe siècle, Paris, 1926.

² M.T. Herrick's Comic theory in the Sixteenth Century, Urbana, 1950, is a study largely based on the numerous and important 16th century commentaries on Terence's plays; while E.W. Robbins' Dramatic Characterization in Printed Commentaries on Terence, 1473-1600 (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XXXV), Urbana, 1951, studies one chosen aspect of Terence's work as reflected in these same commentaries.

does not become properly significant until the establishment of Italian troupes in France in the early 1570's.

Jodelle's L'Eugène bears the marks of this background.

From the farce it takes its octosyllabic metre, its satire on the clergy in the person of the self-indulgent Eugène, the characters of the mari complaisant and his wife with her easy morals. From Terence, its five acts, the rather larger number of characters, the serious nature of some of the speeches (such as Arnault's on the professions of scholar and soldier), and the developed characterisation. From the Italians, as yet, nothing. In the last analysis, the essence of a play lies in what it is about: and there can be no doubt that this play is about the relationship of Alix, the wife, with her easy morals, and Eugène her lover the churchman; about a peril that threatens that relationship and how the peril is avoided. This kind of immoral situation is not Terentian; but it is so typical of farce that we are certainly justified in regarding this play as essentially a farce elaborated by certain formal elements from Latin comedy.¹ Why should this be so? In the serious theatre,

¹ M. Balmas, in his edition of L'Eugène, Milan, 1955, gives greater importance to the formal elements such as the use of acts and scenes and the observations of the unities, and states "Il serait injuste d'en faire tout simplement une farce affublée à l'antique" (p. 16). It is true that the observation of the unities represents a clear break from the extraordinary looseness of the farces in this.....

Jodelle was certainly an innovator, writing in the new form of classical tragedy, which was utterly different from the non-comic forms of his day. Here, he has accepted much more, discarded less. A reason may be that the farces were successful with all social classes in the theatre of his day and so offered something of a guarantee of success if Jodelle used them and simply added certain classical elements. Again, theoretically, comedy is a picture of the life of ordinary people: the figures of, for instance, Guillaume the simpleton or Arnault the enthusiastic soldier-scholar were doubtless considered sufficiently close to contemporary society, without any attempt to adapt Terentian characters. As M. Chamard says, the play shows "un curieux [!] effort pour créer une comédie nationale, inspirée essentiellement de la réalité contemporaine".¹

Marty-Laveaux, writing in his 1868 edition of Jodelle's works, calls L'Eugène "un des meilleurs ouvrages de Jodelle".² He

... respect. But these formal elements cannot be said to outweigh the basic subject of the play — what it is about — which is certainly farcical.

¹ H. Chamard, Histoire de la Pléiade, vol. II, Paris, 1939, p. 19.

² Les Œuvres et Meslanges Poétiques d'Estienne Jodelle, ed. Ch. Marty-Laveaux, Paris, 1868, vol. I, p. 311.

points out "des vers heureux" and "quelques traits de caractère", saying though that it does not show "le moindre talent de composition". Certainly the play is no masterpiece of comic structure like, say, Jonson's Alchemist with its carefully interwoven strands: but it has at least a perfectly unified structure and in three ways shows a definite 'talent de composition'. First, the unity lies, as I have said, in the appearance of a peril and in its successful turning aside, without any irrelevant action at all. Another virtue is in the character of Eugène: he is the only character in French Renaissance comedy who develops in the course of the play, from recklessness to authoritative resourcefulness. And finally, the play is one of the few in French Renaissance comedy in which there is no deus ex machina and in which ^{the} whole action stems from the nature of the characters. Given the arrival of Florimond in act II (at the beginning of the action) and given the characters of the others, the action follows naturally.

L'Eugène is the only surviving comedy out of two by Jodelle, the other being La rencontre. M. Balmas, in his edition of L'Eugène, dates the play at September 1552, and La rencontre, together with the tragedy Cléopâtre, at 1553.¹ The text of La

¹ Ed. cit., pp. 6-12.

rencontre does not survive, but we know a little about its plot: that its dénouement consisted of a group of characters finding themselves within a single 'maison' or compartment; and that either in this play or in Cléopâtre parts were played by Belleau and Jean de la Péruse.¹ The resounding success of the performance of these plays is well known.

The next comedies after Jodelle's, Grévin's La tresorière and Les esbahis, resemble L'Eugène in their metre, still the octosyllable; in their small scale and restricted number of scenes; and in their immorality. Grévin, like Jodelle a student at the Collège de Boncourt,² had his plays acted in University circles, at the Collège de Beauvais, in 1559 (La tresorière) and 1561 (Les esbahis). La Maubertine is probably a third comedy by him, now lost.³ Both plays were published in Le theatre de Jaques Grevin in 1561; and it seems that in 1567 he still thought highly enough of them to prepare a new edition, for a copy of the 1561 edition exists with manuscript changes in his hand, apparently made for a new edition by

¹ Cf. part II below.

² Cf. H. Chamard, Histoire de la Pléiade, vol. II, p. 5.

³ Cf. Appendix B below.

the printer Plantin which never appeared.¹

Grévin's interest in the theatre was wide. Each of the two comedies was performed together with other plays, La tresorière preceded by the satyr-play Les veaux, Les esbahis by Les veaux and Grévin's tragedy César — a deliberate attempt to reproduce something of the dramatic performances of the ancients. And side by side with this neo-classical endeavour, he shows a knowledge of the theatre in his own time, telling us in his Brief discours of the plays staged on moving carts in Flanders in his day. Finally, theatre imagery is used in a number of his poems, especially in one sonnet of his Gelodacrye:

Qu'est-ce de ceste vie? un public eschafault,
Où celuy qui sçait mieux jouer son personnage,
Selon ses passions eschangeant le visage,
Est tousjours bien venu et rien ne luy défaut.

... Ainsi souventes fois l'on voit sur un theatre
Un conte, un duc, un roy à mille jeux s'esbatre,
Et puis en un instant un savetier nouveau ...²

It may be partly because of this theatrical interest that it is the plots that are the most attractive feature of his two comedies: they are restless, skilfully built up and unified, especially in La tresorière

¹ Cf. bibliography, section 1, below, and fig. 1.

² Théâtre complet et poésies choisies, ed. L. Pinvert, Paris, 1922, p. 316.

with its financial complications, as though he were most aware of this side of dramatic writing. His characters are less full than Jodelle's; his language less colourful than Belleau's.

Remy Belleau, as we saw, acted in the first performances of Jodelle's Cléopâtre and La rencontre; he was also to write verses for Baif's Le brave. His own comedy, La reconnue, was first published in the posthumous collection of 1578, but in an apparently incomplete form, in that a number of the lines lack a rhyme. Marty-Laveaux points out ten such lines in the play;¹ four of them are lines ending a scene and one of them is the closing line of the whole play:

... on soupe, je le sens
Je vous prirois d'entrer oens
Si la salle estoit assez grande.
Mais adieu, je me recommande,
Ce sera pour une autrefois.

It may indeed be, as the preface Au lecteur of the 1578 edition says, that the play was left unfinished; but it seems an odd process of composition whereby extra lines should be added for the sake of rhyme at a later date, so that I am inclined to accept the imperfection as it stands.

The play is set in 1563, the year of the siege of Le Havre and a year after the siege of Poitiers, both of which are mentioned

¹ Remy Belleau, Ouvres Poétiques, ed. Ch. Marty-Laveaux, vol. 2, Paris, 1878, p. 483.

in the text. We may suppose that the date of composition, and perhaps of performance, is the same as the date of the action. In any case, the play must already have been old by the time of its first publication in 1578.

La reconnue's subject is again reminiscent of farce; but nevertheless in one respect is nearer to Terentian comedy than is Jodelle's play: in that Belleau gives us a much more unified picture of a bourgeois society. Jodelle's mari complaisant and his wife, a churchman whose pleasures are music and hunting, and two soldiers fresh from the wars, are a varied collection and they give a piecemeal picture of their society. With La reconnue we are much more clearly in a single unified milieu: that of bourgeois men of law and their families. Monsieur is an advocate; Maistre Jehan is his clerk; the young lover is also in the legal world. The young woman around whom the action revolves is, plausibly, Monsieur's ward; Madame, the neighbour and the servants discuss the problems of marriage and family life completely within the context of a closed circle. So closed is it, in fact, that the whole atmosphere is most successfully a claustrophobic one, of sour discontent at one's professional or marital status, of selfishness, of determination to use other people to gain one's own ends: an atmosphere entirely different from the gaiety of nearly all other French Renaissance comedies.

Baïf's two plays, Le brave and L'eunuque, have their place in the history of French Renaissance comedy as adaptations from Plautus and Terence respectively. L'eunuque makes only small changes for stylistic purposes, and the proper names are only modified and not changed: Phaedria in the Eunuchus becomes 'Fedri jouvenceau'. It seems likely that it was performed, perhaps at Court, for the manuscript now in the Bibliothèque Nationale bears the words "Achevée Lendemain de Noël devant jour 1565", as though it were written for some Christmas festivity. Le brave certainly was so performed, as its title-page tells us:

Le Brave, comedie de Jan Antoine de Baïf, jouee
devant le Roy en l'hostel de Guise, à Paris, le
XXVIII de janvier M.D.LXVII.¹

Preceding or following the acts were five 'chantz recitez entre les actes de la comedie', verses perhaps sung, and in honour of the Royal Family and without connection with the subject matter of the play; a variant on the instrumental music used for the same purpose in Jodelle's L'Eugène:

Mesme le son qui les actes separe,
Comme je croy, vous eust semblé barbare,
Si l'on eust eu la curiosité
De remouller du tout l'antiquité.²

¹ J.A. de Baïf, Le brave, Paris, 1567.

² L'Eugène, ed. Balmas, prologue, ll. 69-72. On Baïf's ...

Le brave is rather more of an adaptation than is L'ennemi: Plautus' *Pyrgopolynices* becomes Taillebras, *Periplectomenus* Bontams. The original is sometimes out, sometimes amplified; in the last scene of the play, for instance, Taillebras has a speech of fourteen lines in which he pulls himself together ("Ay-je au moins toute ma personne?") which is not in Plautus and may perhaps be a deliberate amplification of the braggart captain's part.¹

Jean de la Taille is a figure of transition between the Pléiade and the more Italianate generation which was to follow. One of his two comedies, Le Negromant, is a translation from Ariosto, while the other, Les corrivaux, borrows its plot from Boccaccio. T.A. Daley believed² that it was based mainly on Parabosco's Il Viluppo (1547), to which it certainly shows strong resemblances. It is also very similar to Nardi's I due felici rivali (1513). But both the Italian plays are certainly based on the fifth story of the fifth day of Boccaccio's Decameron. And La Taille's play is much simpler

... "chantz", cf. Helen Purkis, "Les intermèdes à la cour de France", Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, XX (1958), 296-309.

¹ The suggestion is, of course, dependent on textual factors: it would be necessary to discover precisely what text of Plautus was available to Baif for translation.

² T.A. Daley, Jean de la Taille (1538-1608), étude historique et littéraire, Paris, 1934, pp. 193-5.

than either of the Italian plays, so that it appears to be derived not from either of the Italian plays, but from Boccaccio, either from the original or from a French translation. Two factors confirm this. First, in *La Taille*, the heroine is recognised by a mark under her left ear. Neither *Il Viluppo* nor *I due felici rivali* has this, but it is the device used by Boccaccio. And second, in *La Taille* the heroine bears the unusual name of Restitue, a name not used either in *Il Viluppo* or in *I due felici rivali*. This name admittedly, is not Boccaccio's heroine's name either; but in the form *Restituta*, it appears in the succesding story of the Decameron, the sixth story of the fifth day. The play itself may be dated at 1562: for in act II, scene ii *Fleurdelys* is called "une fille jeune d'un quinze ans", and in act IV, scene v we learn that she was four or five years old when the French army entered Toul (in 1552). *Le Neeromant* probably dates from the same period, when *La Taille* and his brother Jacques were at the University of Paris and when we know that they both wrote tragedies and comedies.¹

Le Neeromant takes its place in the number of translations of Italian comedies into French, which had begun already in the 1540's;

¹ Jean de la Taille states that his brother wrote "comme moy (selon le vray art, et la façon antique) Poëmes entiers, Tragedies et Comedies, en l'âge de 16, 17 et 18 ans" (*Seul le furieux* ..., Paris, 1572, f. 70).

but Les corrivaux is the first original French comedy to be inspired by an Italian source. In this, and especially in that it is a non-dramatic source, La Taille shows his originality, just as he did in his Saül le furieux, in showing an individual variation on tradition.¹ But despite its Italian debt, Les corrivaux (like Saül) is only a variation on an established tradition, not a breaking away from it like Le Loyer's Nephelococugie later. In its formal structure, it remains close to L'Eugène, La tresorière, Les esbahis and La reconnue. It is short; it has few scenes; its characters are few. It uses a farcical situation whereby two servants find themselves at the same place at the same time to give secret signals to the two young lovers who have bribed them; but the situation is less developed than it might have been in one of the later Italianate plays of the kind of Turnèbe's Les oontens.

To these various comedies we may add three translations from the Italian in this early period. Charles Estienne's Comedie

¹ Cf. Daley, op. cit.; A. Werner, Jean de la Taille und sein Saül le furieux, Leipzig, 1908, pp. lvi-lviii.

du Sacrifice, Lyon, 1543, has the distinction of being the first translation of an Italian comedy into French, and is taken from Gl'Ingannati of the Intronati of Siena. It proved popular enough to be printed in two further editions, in 1548 and 1556, though under the new title of Les abusez.¹ Jacques Bourgeois' Comedie tres elegante, en laquelle sont contenues les Amours reocreatives d'Erostrate ... et de la belle Polimnesto Paris, 1545, from Ariosto's I Suppositi, unfortunately does not survive, though the very precision of the title, given by La Vallière in 1768², seems to show that it did in fact exist. Jean-Pierre de Mesmes' Comedie des supposez, too, seems to have been a good deal less popular than Etienne's play, in that the first edition (Paris, 1551) exists in a re-issue of 1585, some thirty years later, consisting of unsold copies of the first edition provided only with a new title-page.

It is surely remarkable that two of these three translations, and La Taille's Le Neveu as well as Godard's Les desguisez later in the century, should all be from Ariosto, when very large numbers

¹ The first edition is rare; a copy in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal is cited by Mme Horn-Monval, Traductions et adaptations françaises du théâtre étranger, vol. 3, Paris, 1960, p. 70. Cf. H.W. Lawton, "Charles Etienne et le théâtre", Revue du seizième siècle, XIV (1927), 336-47.

² Bibliothèque, vol. 3, Dresden, 1768, p. 243.

of other Italian comedies were by this time in existence and in print. It is yet another example of Ariosto's great popularity in France in the 16th century in various literary fields, including the related one of tragi-comedy.¹

The whole question of translation and imitation, of course, has a particular significance when it is considered in the context of the literary theories of the time, according to which translation was a highly acceptable form of literary endeavour.² Thomas Sebillet could write in 1548: "La Version ou Traduction est aujourd'huy le Poëme plus frequent et mieus receu des estimés Poëtes et des doctes lecteurs"³ and the example of, say, Amyot, and countless others throughout the century confirms this. The less direct form of imitation was by so much the more acceptable. Du Bellay's idea is well known, that the writer should take over elements from his models

¹ Garnier's Bradamante, the first surviving tragi-comedy, is from Ariosto; so, presumably, was the lost La belle Genièvre, performed at Fontainebleau in 1564 (Cf. G. Cohen, "Ronsard et le théâtre", Mélanges offerts à Henri Chamard, Paris, 1951, p. 124). Cf. A. Cioranescu, L'Arioste en France, Paris, 1938. (2 vol.)

² Cf. esp. Grahame Castor, Fléiade Poetica, Cambridge, 1964, in particular chapter 6 'Imitation of model authors', pp. 63-76.

³ Art Poétique François, ed. F. Gaiffe, Paris, 1938, p. 28.

(who might be Greek or Roman or Italian), should assimilate them to become as it were part of his own flesh and blood, and then out of them, once assimilated, should produce his own works. Actual literal translation found less favour in his eyes, though some of his own poems are in fact almost direct translations from the Italian. Sebillet, his opponent, on these grounds was able to accuse him of hypocrisy:

Si je fay moins pour moy en traduisant anciens
auteurs qu'en cêrchant inventions nouvelles, je
ne suy toutefois tant a reprendre que celuy qui
se vante d'avoir trouvé, ce qu'il ha mot a mot
traduit des autres.¹

But it remained a fact that translations and imitations from the Latin and from the Italian found sufficient favour in Renaissance eyes for there to have been a constant stream of them throughout our period. For comedy perhaps more than for other literary genres, the point is an important one, and we shall return to it.

The genre of comedy, then, has its place in the Pléiade's literary activity. Ronsard himself seems to have taken part in it, for his biographer Claude Binet tells us that he translated Aristophanes' Plutus while at the Collège de Coqueret. If this were so, it and Le Loyer's Néphélococurie of 1578 would be the only known

1

Quoted from H. Chamard, Joachim du Bellay, Lille, 1900.

translations of Aristophanes into French in the 16th century.

But it has not survived; and a Plutus is also attributed to Baif, who, as we know, translated or adapted two Latin comedies and may well have translated this also. Without further evidence, we cannot do better than adopt M. Lebègue's ingenious suggestion that the translation was a joint undertaking of the two while at the Collège de Coqueret.¹ — There are also other marginal connections of Ronsard with the theatre: the "chant" which he wrote for Baif's Le brave, or the liking for farce which he shows in the Elegie à la Royne of 1564:

Quand voirrons-nous sur le haut d'une scène
 Quelque Janin ayant la joue pleine
 Ou de farine ou d'ancre, qui dira
 Quelque bon mot qui vous réjouira?²

In the time of the Pléiade, ten comedies at least were written; two were performed at Court, which was not a small achievement; Belleau and Jean de la Pérusse acted in the performance of La rencontre with Cléopâtre; Etienne Pasquier, Jean Vauquelin de la

¹ Tableau, p. 301. Gustave Cohen, in his "Ronsard et le théâtre", p. 123, suggests that the translation was neither by Ronsard nor by Baif, but by Dorat. Cf. also Ronsard, Ouvres complètes, ed. P. Laumonier, VI, p. 462 and n.

² Ouvres complètes, XIII, p. 148.

Fresnaye and ^{Turnèbe} Ternebus (father of the author of Les contents) saw the performance. Verse for Le brave was written by Vasquin Philieul, Ronsard, Belleau, Desportes and Balf himself. It is no exaggeration to say that at this early period, comedy was a genre that owed its existence almost entirely to the students of the Collège de Boncourt: first Jodelle, with his fellow-students Belleau and La Péruse as actors; then Belleau himself; while La Taille and Grévin both studied there.¹ Muret and Buchanan, both teaching at the Collège de Boncourt in the early 1550's, may perhaps have encouraged this production, though they themselves wrote tragedies only and not comedies.

Ten plays are not many, in a period of twenty years. Italy was producing far larger numbers of comedies at this time; so was England, fifty years later. The number of the comedies is not so important as their qualities; but still, we may ask why there were so few. First, it is certain that the comic genre was less highly rated than the tragic, as we shall see when we come to examine comic theory in the Renaissance: it dealt with bourgeois rather than nobles, it showed comparatively trivial matters for entertainment rather than high moral ones for edification. Doubtless Terence was

¹ Cf. H. Chamard, Histoire de la Pléiade, vol. II, pp. 5-8.

highly esteemed; but it was for his rhetorical qualities and not for his moral ones; while authors like Virgil had their share of esteem. Second, on practical grounds: of all literary works, plays cannot exist only on the printed page; they need a theatre and a whole theatrical tradition. The Pléiade generation had only fellow-students to use as actors, necessarily amateurs without any established tradition. The living theatre of the time had only trivial farces as a comic genre. These authors, then — Jodelle, Crévin, Belleau, La Taille — were faced with a choice of a living theatrical tradition in the farces, or a University milieu without permanence or experience; and all of this first generation seem to have tried to create, and to have succeeded in creating, a fusion of the two. But they still lacked theatres and actors; and practical reasons of this kind doubtless partly explain the small number of comedies written at the time of the Pléiade.

2. Italianate comedy: 1575-88.

In the late 1570's, a new period begins not only in the history of comedy but in the literary scene as a whole. The Italianism of the time of the Pléiade, that by reaction had for a time become less evident in France, now returns in a different way, and in strength. Translations and adaptations of Italian works appear; Italian music and literature become talking points; and

in the theatre particularly, the situation is completely changed by the enormous success, hitherto only sporadic, of the travelling troupes of Italian actors.

The translations and adaptations are legion. One of the most prolific writers was Gabriel Chappuis, who by the sheer volume of his work and the kaleidoscope of his interests resembles the other writers of comedies Pierre de Larivey and François d'Amboise. The full stream of his literary production is around the late 1570's and early 1580's — precisely the period which concerns us here. Italian literature concerns him most of all. One book in particular interests us here: the 1583 edition of his translation from Antonfrancesco Doni's I Mondi: Les mondes celestes, terrestres et infernaux ... Tirez des œuvres de DONI Florentin, par GABRIEL CHAPPUIS Tourangeau. Depuis reveus, corrigez et augmentez du Monde des CORNUZ ... par F.C.T. [François (?) Chappuis Tourangeau],¹ Lyons, Barthelemy Honorati, 1583. I Mondi, first published in 1552, was a collection of dialogues, Lucianic in form but without Lucian's trenchant wit, adopting a variant of Lucian's Vera Historia: a satire on this world by a supposed description of another. Chappuis first

¹ Both the 1583 and the 1580 editions (see below) have "F.C.T."; but there is no doubt that the work as a whole is by Gabriel Chappuis.

published his translation at Lyons in 1578.¹ A second edition, of 1580, claims on the title-page that the Mondes are here "reveuz, corrigez et augmentez du Monde des Cornuz par F.C.T."; but in fact they are no such thing. The Monde des Cornuz first appears in the 1583 edition (though its existence earlier may be presumed from the mention in 1580), and it includes a comedy, L'avare cornu. We are to imagine the situation of the prologue to The Beggar's Opera; to prove a point (in this case about cuckolds), Le Poëte takes Le Curieux aside and has a play acted before him:

Je vous feray sortir maintenant quelques personnages qui vous demonstreront par la Scene Comique une autre maniere de cornuz que vous ne pensiez et vous feront toucher au doigt ce que je vous nye [sic, "dye"?]: car la chose representée au vif ainsi qu'elle ha esté faite, ha plus d'energie et d'efficace, que ce qui se declare par parolles.²

In between the five acts, and after the play, there are discussions between the two onlookers. This play, L'avare cornu, appears to be an original creation by Chappuis — so, indeed, does the whole of the Monde des cornuz — a point which I have never seen sufficiently made

¹ Les mondes celestes, terrestres et infernaux ... Tirez des œuvres de Doni Florentin, par Gabriel Chappuis Tourangeau. Lyons, Barthelemy Honorati, 1578.

² 1583 edn., p. 666.

clear.¹ No edition of Doni that I have seen includes an Italian original of this section, so that Chappuis in fact appears to have appended his own original contribution to his translation. The title-page of the 1583 edition is in fact ambiguous: "reveuz, corrigez et augmentez du Monde des Cornuz" could mean that Chappuis was the author of the additions, or merely that he was adding more translations to this 1583 edition. But in view of the absence of an original by Doni, and the very traditionally French nature of the play, it is most likely that the play is by Chappuis.

The play itself reminds us of the earlier generation in its combination of farce elements with modern ideas of the comic ideal. The avant-jeu repeats some of Jodelle's claims:

Vous orrez l'antique sujet
Et non le stile trop abject
Des basteleurs qui veulent plaire
Tant seulement au populaire.²

¹ In his article "L'avare de Doni et L'avare de Molière", Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, I (1894), 38-48, Emile Roy bases literary judgements on the unfortunate assumption that Chappuis' play is necessarily a translation of a play by Doni, existing but not found by Roy. Toldo, five years later, in a footnote to his "La comédie française de la Renaissance", *ibid.*, VI (1899), p. 571, attributes "une certaine originalité" to Chappuis in the section Le monde des cornuz.

² 1583 edn., p. 669.

The play itself, like L'Eugène, has five acts. But there are few other classical elements: like L'Eugène, its simple plot derives from the farces (a vieillard amoureux and his amorous adventures) and its metre is octosyllabic like the farces'. Only by its inclusion in a translation from the Italian does it provide a link with the new generation.

One of the more interesting figures — though his comedy is unfortunately lost — is Hierosme d'Avost. In 1583 he published his Essais de Hierosme d'Avost, de Laval, sur les sonets du divin Petrarque, a slim book elegantly produced: essais not in Montaigne's sense or in ours, but experiments or attempts in translation. The sonnets are few in number but thoughtful in technique and presentation. D'Avost has a more than academic interest in translation and its problems: the dedication discusses the ways in which he is naturalising Petrarch, while at the end of the book, for comparison with his own versions of the same poems, he prints four translations of Petrarch sonnets by other poets: two by Vasquin Philieul of Carpentras, and two versions of Hor che'l ciel ..., one by Pelletier and one by Etienne du Tronchet.

D'Avost's interest in the Italians extended to comedy. La Croix du Maine reports ¹ that he has made a translation from Louis

¹ La Croix du Maine, Bibliothèque françoise, Paris, 1584, [1772-3 edn.:] I, 373.

Domenichi, called Les deux courtisanes, which is now (1584) ready for publication. As far as we know, it never appeared, and La Croix du Maine's is the only evidence that we have about it. That should be reliable evidence, however, for d'Avost's book actually contains a sonnet "A Monsieur de La Croix du Maine, sur sa Bibliotheque".¹

The pattern of Chappuis' and d'Avost's achievement — an interest in literary creation, largely based on Italian models, with a bias towards translation, and an interest in comedy as one part of that creative activity — is on a small scale a pattern typical of two of the other known comic writers in France in the '70's and '80's; Pierre de Larivey and François d'Amboise. It seems likely that Odet de Turnèbe, too, had he lived, might have written in the same pattern, for his one play, Les contens, shows him to have had a closer knowledge of Italian literature than a mere passing interest could account for. The philosopher Giordano Bruno, visiting Paris in 1581-3, published his comedy there; it may well have been French influences of this kind that inspired him too to produce this side-product of his other very different works.

¹ In the Boesies appended to the Essais (but dated 1583), f.11. The poem by Philieul provides a link with the earlier generation of comic writers, for as we saw Philieul was the author of one of the "chantz recitez entre les actes de la comedie" of Balf's Brave in 1567.

Pierre de Larivey fits the pattern closely. His plays are not the isolated products of a single enthusiast for the Italian theatre, but rather fit into the variegated literary production, of many different kinds but always Italianate, of a circle interested in the same kinds of models and literary techniques, producing the same kinds (and the same volume) of works. Larivey's interests were as wide as any: his Maits facétieuses are translated from Straparola, the Filosofie fabuleuse from Firenzuola and Doni, the Philosophie et Institution morale from Piccolomini, the Humanité de Jesus-Christ from Aretino, the Veilles from Arnigio. His 19th century editor Fournier saw him as a Renaissance Jekyll and Hyde, turning now to sacred works, now to profane ones ("après cette débauche de traductions comiques, où la décence avait eu fort à souffrir, notre chanoine trouva bon de se purifier par un peu de philosophie et de piété ... lui-même vivait, malgré le contraste de ces écrits si mêlés, avec toute l'édification d'un chanoine honnête et pratiquant").¹ Certainly a glance at Larivey's comedies will show that they might well represent one side, in moral terms, of such a characterisation. For us, we need only regard him, I think, as a man of wide interests; and if we place him in the context of the group in which he moved, we can see that these wide interests are in fact typical of the whole group: Larivey,

¹ Le théâtre français au XVIe et au XVII siècle, Paris, 1871, p.56.

d'Amboise, Chappuis, d'Avost, Gabriel Le Breton, and others connected with the group even if not authors of comedies such as François de Belleforest or Béroalde de Verville: a literary coterie who unlike the Cinq Auteurs left no collective works, and who unlike Madame de Rambouillet's friends left little direct evidence of actual meetings, but whose friendship is shown by a whole series of liminary verses (to be found in numbers in the pages of Lachèvre), by dedications, even sometimes by "L'Imprimeur au Lecteur".¹ The most constant of their preoccupations was an interest in the literature of Italy.

All nine of Larivey's comedies — indeed, all twelve, if we include the three that were not eventually published — are dedicated to François d'Amboise. The friendship between these two was a long one. As early as 1573 a sonnet by Larivey was included in a work by the young d'Amboise: La Pologne,² while the dedication of his second collection of plays, in 1611, is nearly forty years later. It

¹ For instance, the intriguing note by the printer of d'Amboise's translation from Orazio Landi, Regrets facetieux et plaisantes harangues funebres sur la mort de divers animaux, Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1583: that the translation was originally to be made by François de Belleforest, who however passed the task on to d'Amboise: that d'Amboise had accepted it as an honour, although extremely occupied with journeys to Germany and Italy.

² La Pologne de François d'Amboise Parisien. Au tres-victorieux roy Henry. sur les occurrences de l'election, et observations des choses plus dignes de memoire veues par l'auteur en son voyage. En diverses langues. Paris, Denis Du Pré, 1573, f. 10v.

is difficult to discover precisely what their relations were. Larivey, though a canon of Troyes who at least towards the end of his life is known to have performed his duties in residence at Troyes, implies in a publication of 1580 that he has served M. de Pardessus, "conseiller du Roy en la cour de Parlement de Paris", in some capacity for twenty years. This, presumably, in Paris. D'Amboise, though from 1581 to 1585 and again in 1589 a member of the Parlement at Rennes, does not appear to have exercised his office there,¹ and to judge from his many publications in Paris remained largely in that city. Something of a clue is provided by the same publication of Larivey — Piccolomini's Philosophie et Institution morale — in whose dedication Larivey writes to Pardessus, "ce grand politique Piccolomini ayant appris la langue françoise en vostre maison et à vos despens". This seems to mean that the translation was made in Pardessus' house, presumably while Larivey was in his service in some capacity, and at a time when d'Amboise and Pardessus were professional colleagues. It should be noted that not the least of Piccolomini's many works is the comedy L'Alessandro; there is more than the ordinary family likeness of any two Renaissance braggarts between Piccolomini's Captain Malagigi

¹ Cf. F. Saulnier, Le Parlement de Bretagne 1554-1790, Rennes, 1909, p. 26.

and d'Amboise's *Dom Dieghos*, while Dr. Spector sees a number of resemblances between the play and Turnèbe's Les contens.¹ The connection with d'Amboise is strengthened by a translation which d'Amboise made from yet another of Piccolomini's works: the Dialogues et devis des damoiselles, which went through at least four editions by 1583.²

A colleague of d'Amboise, though younger than he, was Odet de Turnèbe. Turnèbe died in 1581 at the age of 29, and only one major work of his survives: the comedy Les contens. The play was published in the same year (1584) as d'Amboise's Les Neapolitaines (though both plays are earlier); the Italianate nature of both plays, the reading which both presuppose, the use of the comic, are so strikingly similar, that some connection between the two men

¹ Odet de Turnèbe, Les contens, ed. N.B. Spector, Paris, 1964, pp. 146-167.

² I have seen two editions: Paris, Vincent Normand, 1581; and Paris, Robert le Mangnier, 1583; two Lyons editions, one without date and one of 1583, both Benoist Rigaud, are cited by Saudrier, Bibliographie lyonnaise, III, pp. 188 and 378; and a Lyons edition of 1577 is cited in the Biographie universelle, vol. 2, Paris, 1811, p. 25.

seems likely. One would expect it in any case from the professional links. And the society in which both men moved — legalistic, intellectual, Italianate — was a small one. Pardessus' house may well have entertained these two as well as Larivey. Piccolomini's comedy L'Alessandro, as we saw above, appears to have been known to Turnèbe, which would fit in with the translations from that author made by both d'Amboise and Larivey.

D'Amboise's play, Les Neapolitaines, is the only surviving comedy of his out of several which he says were acted: "veües et receües avec un indicible plaisir."¹ La Croix du Maine says that he wrote four comedies in all.² This one is lively, entertaining, though probably less successful than his friend Odet de Turnèbe's Les contens. Professor Lawton calls it "undoubtedly one of the best of the century".³ It borrows from two main plays: Terence's Eunuch and either the Olimpia of Della Porta or the Angelica of Fabritio de Fornaris (the Angelica, as we shall see, is simply a reworking of the

¹ François d'Amboise, Les Neapolitaines, Paris, Abel L'Angelier, 1584, f. 2.

² Bibliothèque française [1772-3 edn.], I, 201.

³ Handbook of French Renaissance Dramatic Theory, Manchester, 1949, p. 83.

Olimpia).¹ Neither of these two last plays, however, was published before Les Neapolitaines, so that we must assume either that d'Amboise knew a manuscript copy of one of them or that he saw a performance, whether in Italy or in France. Moreover, he must have gained his knowledge of one or other play well before 2 December 1583, the date of the privilege of his own comedy. We know that the Angelica was acted in France in 1584, before its publication in 1585 (Fornaris refers to this in his dedication, as we shall see), so that it may well be that it was in fact also acted there even earlier, that d'Amboise saw it and used it for his play. Fornaris tells us that he has had the model for his play — that is to say, the Olimpia — in his hands for some years, so he may well have used it for acting purposes before 1584.

Les Neapolitaines is today one of the rarest of 16th century books. I have traced only two copies, both in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris. A slight bibliographical point arises: the two copies, although both of 1584, are not identical. The title-page of one describes the play as 'facecieuse', the other as 'fort facecieuse',

¹ Bayle called Les Neapolitaines "la traduction d'une comédie italienne" (Dictionnaire historique et critique, 3rd edn., Rotterdam, Michael Bohm, 1720, I, 175); its 19th century editor, Fournier, wrote that it might indeed be a translation, like Larivey's plays, and that an Italian original for it might one day turn up (Le théâtre français, p. 132). As yet, none has. I hope to examine the question of sources more closely in a new edition of the play which I am preparing.

an alteration which has necessitated changing the setting of the type; and the privileges differ.¹ Possibly two impressions are concerned, or possibly the differences were introduced by L'Angelier, the printer, in the course of printing.

In precisely this period — in 1582 — one of the masterpieces of Italian comedy was published in Paris: Giordano Bruno's Il Candelaio.² Critics are unanimous about the excellence of this play, which is nevertheless the philosopher's only dramatic work, for its liveliness and wit and for its use of the dramatic possibilities that the genre of comedy offers. We know that Bruno was in Paris from late in 1581 to (at latest) June 1583;³ the activity of the French literary circle there which we have just discussed, as well as the popularity of the Italian actors and Italian theatre there may have prompted him to publish — indeed, perhaps even to compose — there rather than in Italy.

Within our period, two translations of Il Candelaio were

¹ For full details, see the bibliography below. Cf. fig. 2.

² Candelaio comedia del Bruno Nolano Achademico di nulla Achademia; detto il fastidito. In Tristitia hilaris; in Hilaritate tristis. In Parigi, Appresso Guglielmo Giuliano, 1582. No privilege.

³ Cf. Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the hermetic tradition, London, 1964, pp. 190, 202-4.

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made into French. One was printed in 1633 as Boniface et la Pédant,¹ one is still in manuscript, in what is probably an early 17th century hand;² both are anonymous. The first is a poor effort indeed. Its author writes, in the preface Au lecteur:

Ceux qui l'auront leuë [Il Candelaio] en son original, recognoistreront aisément combien de choses il m'a falu retrancher, et ceux qui la regarderont de prez, telle qu'elle sort de mes mains, se douteront bien combien il en a falu changer. Les Autheurs qui s'attachent aux naivetez de leur langue, et aux particularitez de leur nation, comme font principalement les Comiques, sont plus à imiter, qu'à traduire; une trop grande fidelité m'eut rendu ridicule, et c'eust esté proprement en cette occasion qu'il se fut fait des vices François, de vertus estrangeres: Tu ne trouveras donc pas tousjours icy les mesmes choses, quoy que tu trouves le mesme sujet, non les mesmes rencontres, quoy que de semblables, mais plus modestes: en un mot, si quelque liberté, du moins point de libertinage. Adieu.

This is no proud statement of confidence in one's native language and the consequent necessary techniques of imitation, such as we might have found at the time of the Pléiade; rather, principally, a statement of purification of offending passages, which in the case of a

¹ Boniface et le pédant comedie en prose, Imitée de l'Italien de Bruno Nolano. Paris, Pierre Menard, 1633.

² Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. n.a. 2879, ff. 226-248v. Cf. bibliography below.

play like Il Candelajo is as absurd as Dr. Bowdler's enterprise, and as unsuccessful. If we examine the text, as we are invited to do, we find that it is a cut rather than an altered version of the original, and we also find two other curious facts: first, not all the passages which might be considered offensive have really been removed; and second, certain passages which seem to us today theatrically lively and morally inoffensive, have gone. Thus, the play on asini and animi in I, iii, remains, Bruno's text reads:

Bartholomeo. In questo tempo s'inamoró il Petrarca, et gl'asini anch'essi cominciano a'rizzar la coda.

Bonifacio. Come havete detto?

Barth. Ho detto che in questo tempo se inamoró il Petrarca, et gl'anima anch'essi si drizzano alla contemplatione.¹

And Boniface et le Pédant:

Bartholomeo. Ce fut justement en ce temps-là que Petrarque devint amoureux, et c'est aussi en ce temps-là que les asnes commencent à dresser la queue.

Boniface. Que dis tu?

Barth. Je dy que ce fut justement en ce temps-là que Petrarque devint amoureux, et que c'est aussi en ce temps-là que les asnes se dressent à la contemplation.²

A lively passage in I, ii, where the character Boniface refers to, and indeed quotes, a poem by the "Accademia di nulla Accademia" —

¹ 1582 edn., f. 4 verso.

² P. 6.

who is, of course, Bruno himself — disappears. So does the amusing note in the Argumento on the three principal elements in the play.¹

The manuscript version, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, probably of the early 17th century, is a different translation from the one printed in 1633. For example, the play on asini and animi referred to above is translated as follows:

Bartholomeo. Dans ce temps la petrarque devint amoureux et les ânes aussy commencent a dresser la queue.

Boniface. Comment aves vous dit?

Barth. Jay dit que dans ce temps la petrarque devint amoureux et que les ["esprits" struck out and "ames" substituted] ames aussy ["se dressent" struck out and "s'elevent" substituted] s'elevent a la contemplation.²

But it seems to be a more or less close translation of Bruno's play, and although it is interesting that it should have been made, this straightforward translation need not concern us here. There appears to be no evidence which might connect it with any specific person or troupe.

With the Angelica of Fabrizio de Fornaris, we return to strictly stage history: the Italian troupes in Paris. A very full collection of documents published by Armand Baschet in 1882 still remains the essential reference work; little new evidence has been

¹ Cf. ch. 6 below.

² B.N., MS Fr. n.a. 2879, f. 226 verso.

discovered since then.¹ From his book, and from a study of the French theatre as a whole, it is clear that the success of the Italians in Paris from 1571 onwards was of capital importance. The *Gelosi*, the *Confidenti*, the *Raccolti*; their success and their influence are undoubted even if our knowledge of their repertory and even of their names is limited. One important text in that repertory is Fornaris' Angelica.²

Fornaris was the leader of the *Confidenti* and a specialist in the role of the braggart soldier, that sure success on the Renaissance stage. As the braggart soldier, he called himself "Il Capitano Coccodrillo". John Eliot probably saw him in Paris, and he included him in one of the dialogues in his Ortho-epia gallica, London, 1593.³ We even have a contemporary print and an oil painting

¹ Les comédiens italiens à la cour de France sous Charles IX, Henri III, Henri IV et Louis XIII, Paris, 1882. The influence of the Italians on French comedy has been discussed in three recent articles: R. Lebègue, "La comédie italienne en France au XVI^e siècle", Revue de littérature comparée, XXIV (1950), 5-24; R.C.D. Perman, "The influence of the *commedia dell'arte* on the French theatre before 1640", French Studies, IX (1955), 293-303; N.B. Spector, "Odette de Turnèbe's Les contes and the Italian comedy", French Studies, XIII (1959), 304-313.

² Angelica, comedia de Fabritio de Fornaris Napolitano detto il Capitano Coccodrillo Comico Confidente, Paris, Abel l'Angelier, 1585.

³ Cf. Frances Yates, A study of Love's Labour's Lost, Cambridge, 1936, pp. 50-72, 163, 177.

of him in his role of Coccodrillo, living up to the thunderous captain of his play.¹ Angelica, in which the captain is called Coccodrillo, is a reworking of the comedy Olimpia by Giambattista Della Porta (in which the captain is called Trasilogo). Fornaris says in the dedication to the Duc de Joyeuse (in whose house he says it was acted) that it is based on a comedy given him by a Neapolitan gentleman in Venice: — "mi fu da un gentil-homo Napolitano virtuosissimo spirto, donata questa comedia" — quite possibly Della Porta himself, who was like Fornaris a Neapolitan and who spent a considerable time in Venice at this period. The theory that Fornaris constructed his play on a commedia dell'arte scenario by Della Porta (rather than on a full-length commedia erudita by him)² appears to rest on an unsupported statement by the 18th century scholar Francesco Bartoli.³ In fact, the play is so similar to Olimpia that no other source comes into the question.

Angelica was acted, according to the dedication, in the

¹ Cf. fig. 10.

² For example, in M.T. Herrick, Italian comedy in the Renaissance, Urbana, 1960, pp. 216-22, where the theory is used to support an argument in the text.

³ Notizie istoriche de' comici italiani, Padua, 1781, I, 230. The question is fully dealt with by Louise G. Clubb, Giambattista Della Porta Dramatist, Princeton, 1965, pp. 250, 305-6.

house of the Duc de Joyeuse. As a vehicle for Fornaris in his role of Coccodrillo, as we see him in the painting, it is excellent; but we should not assume that the changes from his model were directed exclusively towards the development and expansion of this role. He says that his model was "da me vista, et in qualche parte imbellita, ó fiorita, per quanto con la Comica prattica sapevo intraducendoli il Capitano Coccodrillo con alcune sue rocamontate".¹ In fact, Coccodrillo's role is by no means disproportionate (IV, it is the last scene, by no means near the end, in which he appears). Olimpia has been changed according to Fornaris' taste ("imbellita, ó fiorita") as a totality, in many details outside the captain's part, doubtless to suit the troupe as a whole of which Fornaris was leader.

Angelica, then, is a commedia erudita — not a commedia dell'arte — acted by the Confidenti in Paris. It can hardly have been the only one of its kind. A professional troupe does not develop the technique necessary for such a performance for the sake of a single play. Moreover, the little we know of the 16th century Italian troupes tells us that they performed both commedie erudite and commedie dell'arte: two genres, and techniques, related but certainly different.

¹ Dedication, f. a ii verso.

We may add to this the scraps of evidence that we have about the performance of comedies in France at this time (such as d'Amboise's plays "veues et receues avec un plaisir indicible") and it seems quite clear that the dramatic production of France, at least in the 1570's and 1580's, was set within the context of active and frequent stage performances.

One such stage performance is that at the Chateau de Pougy in 1585. As it very probably concerned either Larivey or d'Amboise, it is worth recalling it here. It was a performance of a comedy at the baptism of Henri, duc de Luxembourg, on 16 January 1585 [n.s. 1586] at Pougy. The festivities included a banquet, "et apres souper force Musique, un grand Bal, une Comedie, et toute autre sorte d'esbatements et recreations honnestes, qui durerent l'espace de trois jours".¹ The words are from the description of the Discours sur le baptesme de Henry de Luxembourg Prince de Tingry, Dressé par Maistre Guillaume de Taix Doyen en l'Eglise de Troyes; that is, by a colleague of Larivey. The baptism was administered by the Bishop of Troyes. That the comedy was one of Larivey's seems at least possible; it would be confirmed by Larivey's dedication of his Divers discours (from Cappelloni) to Charles, Henri's cousin, another member of the

¹ N. Vignier, Histoire de la maison de Luxembourg, Paris, 1617, p. 392.

house of Luxembourg. Charles, too, was the dedicatee of d'Amboise's Les Neapolitaines. The connections seem to be too many to be fortuitous.

In 1599, fourteen years after publishing Angelica, Abel l'Angelier published a translation of it into French: Angelique Comedie, de Fabrice de Fourharis Napolitain, dit le Capitaine Cocodrille Comique Confidant. Mis [sic] en François, des langues Italiennes et Espagnolle. par le sieur L.C. The gap in time is surprising. "Le sieur L.C." may well be "Larivey Champenois", since the adjective appears on the title-page on all Larivey's acknowledged works ("Pierre de Larivey Champenois"); if so, the gap in time would be paralleled by the equally surprising gap in Larivey's acknowledged dramatic publications, between the 1579 edition and the three subsequent plays thirty years later, in 1611. The attribution is by no means certain, however. In all Larivey's nine acknowledged plays, the action is modified so that the plays may be "representées comme advenues en France": the place-names are changed, the savour of French colloquial speech replaces the Italian. But Angelique takes place in Venice, like its original; even though its prose style is lively enough. The preface L'Imprimeur au Lecteur tells us only that some small changes have been made in the translation. There appears to be no evidence other than the initials "L.C." connecting this

translation with any specific troupe or literary circle.¹

When Montaigne travelled to Italy in 1580-1, he bought in Florence "un paquet d'onze comédies".² He can hardly have been alone in this, and in fact many of the copies of Italian plays now in French libraries have probably been in France since the 16th century. Larivey, to translate his nine plays, must have had access to his nine originals, and Turnèbe and d'Amboise, too, unless they saw their various models acted by Italian troupes, must have known copies of them. D'Amboise, who certainly travelled in Italy,³ may well have done as Montaigne did. But some supplement to these imported copies was feasible, and two Paris printers saw a commercial opening in the mode for Italian things: Jerome de Marnaf and the widow of Guillaume Cavellat, who published in 1585 a reprint of the old facing-page translation of Ariosto's I Suppositi

¹ The printer is Abel L'Angelier, the same who printed Larivey's other plays and d'Amboise's Les Neapolitaines; but in view of L'Angelier's considerable other productions, this is scanty evidence. — The Italian version was once more reprinted, in Venice in 1607; the dedication of this edition refers to "L'Angelica Comedia del Capitan Coccodrillo, stampata già in Parigi". This new edition is perhaps curious, since the plays close original Olimpia had already been reprinted in Venice in 1597, after the first Naples edition of 1589 (cf. Clubb, Giambattista Della Porta, p. 318).

² Journal de Voyage en Italie, ed. M. Rat, Paris, 1955, p. 192.

³ Cf. above, p. 42, n.1.

by Jean-Pierre de Mesmes.¹ It is something of a bibliographical curiosity. Thirty-eight years had elapsed since the last edition of this translation, yet the type is identical. Either the type had been left set up for 38 years (which is unlikely) or this edition represents a number of unsold copies of the earlier edition, provided with new title-pages and sold off. In any case, the translator's name is not mentioned, and the new edition, unlike the old, is explicitly aimed at the teach yourself market: "Pour l'utilité de ceux qui desirent sçavoir la langue Italienne."

Montaigne comments on the Italian plays that he knew, and his comment, as one would expect, is to the point. His taste in some matters was for simplicity — in the cannibals' songs of love and war, for example, which he paraphrases in Des cannibales² — and in comedy he preferred Terence and Plautus to what he considered the excessive complexity of the Italians:

Pour l'estimation de Térence, il m'est souvent tombé en fantaisie comme en nostre temps, ceuz qui se meslent de faire des comedies (comme les Italiens qui y sont assez heureux) emploient trois ou quatre arguments de celles de Térence ou de Plaute pour en faire une des leurs. Ils entassent,

¹ First published by Estienne Groulleau in 1552; cf. chapter I above.

² Essais, ed. J. Plattard, Paris, 1931, I, 11, 103-5.

en une seule comedie, cinq ou six contes de Boccace ... N'ayant pas du leur assez de quoi nous arrester, ils veulent que le conte nous amuse.¹

He is telling us here about his own taste, as so often in the Essais, and the comment is hardly intended to be an absolute judgement; after all, Bibbiena's Calandria or Bruno's Il Candelaio are not intrinsically less likely to succeed than Terence or Plautus, and Montaigne must have known that the Calandria had in fact succeeded on stage in France in his own century. In the theatre, a stage success counts for more than any abstract evaluative judgement. — But in one point he seems to be factually wrong, as far as the evidence available to us shows: Italian comedies are not as a rule built up on "cinq ou six contes de Boccace" or indeed of any other conteur. M.T. Herriek's Italian comedy in the Renaissance, which covers all the most important plays in some detail, mentions several based on one story of Boccaccio, none based on more than one. In France (as we saw in the first part of this chapter) the only comedy based on Boccaccio is Jean de La Taille's Les Corrivaux, and this is based on a single story, borrowing only a proper name from another story.

One product of the new Italianism, in 1580, was Robert

¹ Ibid., II, 1, 115.

Garnier's Bradamante. It may appear odd to introduce this tragi-comedy into a discussion of comedy; but certain features of the play can best be understood in the context of specifically comic theory and practice of the time. First, the name of the genre: a tragi-comedy may be so called because of certain character elements, as Plautus applied the term tragicomoedia to his Amphitryon: a play not only about gods and heroes (like a tragedy) or about ordinary citizens (like a comedy) but a play mixing the two. In Bradamante, the comic character element is in the couple Aymon and Beatrix. Aymon is a paladin of Charlemagne's court, and might be expected to behave accordingly; yet he and his wife Beatrix discuss the future of their daughter Bradamante as any bourgeois couple would in any out-and-out comedy; anxious concern that her marriage shall be socially acceptable, complaints that children no longer obey their parents, and so on. The result is a deliberately comic incongruity. Another feature related to comedy is in the character of Leon. This braggart goes through all the standard paces of any braggart in any Renaissance comedy, though not as violently: he boasts, he threatens, he is faced with the need to fight, he is deflated. Turnèbe's Rodomont, Hardy's Scanderbeg, do nothing different. This point, it is true, should not be exaggerated, because although this is primarily a situation of comedy, it is one of tragi-comedy and of non-theatrical genres as well: Garnier's

braggart has a model, indeed, in the Orlando furioso, the main source for the play as a whole: the braggart Rodomont.¹

The history of comedy at this time is not tidy. We are faced with gaps like the fourteen years between Angelica and its translation; and too many facts, like the repertory of the Italian troupes, are unknown to us. We come now to two writers within our period isolated both geographically and aesthetically from the society we have just discussed. The first is Pierre Le Loyer, Angevin. Better known that his plays today are his volumes on witchcraft, sizeable and passing through three editions in 1586, 1605 and 1608, as well as a 1605 translation into English. His two plays, Le muet insensé and Les Néphélococurie, ou la nûce des cocuz, are quite isolated in their day. The 1869 editor of the comedy La Néphélococurie called it "une œuvre qui n'a pas, ce nous semble, son pendant dans quelque langue que ce soit": in fact, it is an adapted version of Aristophanes' Clouds, with some elements from the Birds; with the lost Plutus of Ronsard (or Baif; or Dorat) it is the only comedy from Aristophanes within our period.

The other is Gerard de Vivre, a Ghent schoolmaster. His three plays are all written "pour l'utilité de la jeunesse et usage des escoles françoises", and to judge from the number of

¹ On the braggart generally, cf. part III below.

editions, enjoyed some success in their time. All three are called "comedies", but all three are in fact hybrids. One of them, La fidelité nuptiale, was first published in 1577¹ and already in part imitates the techniques of the Italian troupes of the '70's. La Vallière rightly speaks of lazzi in this play: in act II Charès, "jeune gentilhomme avec la cappe et l'espée", sings to his lute, as a serenade to his beloved's window above, no fewer than five popular tunes of the day (Toutes les nuitots, Susanne un jour, Bon jour mon cœur, Douce memoire, Mon cœur se recommande à vous), but is interrupted by a servant emptying a bucket of water from the window. In act III his valet tries to imitate him, and a whole series of stage directions describe the lazzi of the scene, for example:

Cependant qu'il chantera, sortira un autre accoustré legierement ayant un masque devant la face, lequel se mettra devant la porte tout debout en un coin, là ou l'autre ira chanter, et se tiendra là coy, comme si c'estoit une colonne à soustenir les fenestragés.

Vivre's concern for stage business is seen, too, in specific signs that he uses throughout his plays; the full table will be found in the chapter on staging below (II, 7). La fidelité nuptiale and the

¹ Comedie de la fidelité nuptiale, Anvers, 1577.

other two plays are as far as I know the only French plays of the century where stage directions and signs are used in any number. The lazzi, the mask, and certain names (Achantio, Fardaliscoa) in particular show Italian influence.

3. To Corneille's Mélite: 1589-1630.

It may be imagined that Emile Chasles, with his Darwinian theory of the evolution of literature, found this an unprofitable period. To him, it seemed a period of silence through which French comedy somehow had to pass before the new comedy of the 17th century could be reached: "La comédie grandit en silence, dans le secret, pour ainsi dire; et, lorsqu'elle reparaît au XVII^e siècle, on la trouve mûrie et déjà forte" (La comédie en France au XVII^e siècle, p. 114). In fact, the silence is in part an absence of documents; if we cannot "see" comedy at this time, then to continue the Darwinian metaphor, it is partly because the fossils have been destroyed. But we are slightly better off today than Chasles was. In particular, Mme Deierkauf-Holsboer in her life of Alexandre Hardy (unfortunately published in a non-literary periodical),¹ and Professor Gill in the introduction to his edition of Les ramoneurs,²

¹ S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, "La vie d'Alexandre Hardy, Poète du Roi", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 91 (1947), 378-404.

² Cf. bibliography below.

have demonstrated that a whole comic genre existed at this time, whose plays were very probably similar to the one surviving example Les ramoneurs: that is, complex, vigorous and designed as entertainment, never published, and standing firmly in a long theatre tradition. Professor Gill has shown conclusively that Les ramoneurs cannot be earlier than 1623 (probably 1624);¹ so that if we may judge from this one play (and it seems that we may) then Corneille's scorn for the plays before Mélite — "Je n'avois pour guide qu'un peu de sens commun, avec les exemples de feu Mr Hardy"² — seems to derive from a prejudice against a form of drama he considered out of date, and not from the degeneration of the genre itself. Renaissance comedy was out of date, just as Marot, Saint-Gelais and Sebillet were out of date and condemned by the Pléiade despite any merits that may be apparent to us today. In any case, no special pleading is necessary to show that Les ramoneurs is as lively a play, as capable of achieving stage success, as any of the 16th century comedies.

But how deep is the silence that Chasles refers to? It seems improbable in historical terms even if not in evolutionist ones,

¹ Ed. cit., pp. xxx-xxxv.

² Examen to Mélite, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre, Lille and Geneva, 1950, p. 135.

that the genre of comedy should disappear from the scene at the end of the 16th century, produce one excellent play around 1624 and then take a different turn with Corneille. Let us look at the evidence. The following table reproduces everything I have found that is relevant to the texts of actual comedies in France from 1588 to 1629, excluding only farces pure and simple and references to performance, which are never conclusive with regard to specific comedies:¹

- 1589 François Perrin: Sichem ravisseur, containing Les escoliers (possibly written earlier).
- 1589 Gerard de Vivre: new edition of plays first published in 1577.
- 1594 Jean Godard: Ouvres, containing Les desguises.
- 1595 Gerard de Vivre: new edition.
- 1597 Pierre de Landun d'Aigaliers: a comedy (text does not survive).
- 1597 Pierre de L. rivey: new edition of plays first published in 1579.
- 1597 Etienne Jodelle: new edition of Ouyres poetiques, including L'Eugene.
- 1598 Jacques de Lavardin: new edition of translation of the Celestina.
- 1599 Marc de Papillon (Le capitaine Lasphrise): Ouyres, including La nouvelle tragicomique.

¹ For fuller details on any particular item, see the bibliography below.

- 1599 Translation of Fomaris' Angelica (first published in Paris in 1585) into French as Angélique, possibly by Larivey.
- 1600 Pierre de Larivey: new edition.
- 1602 Jean de la Taille: new edition of plays first published in 1573.
- 1602 Gerard de Vivre: new edition.
- 1604 Rémy Belleau: new edition of Ouvres poétiques, including La reconnue.
- 1606 François Perrin: new edition.
- 1608 Les bravacheries du Capitaine Spavente, a translation of the first six of 55 dialogues by the actor Francesco Andreini, made by Jacques de Fonteny.
- 1611 Pierre de Larivey: three new comedies published (but probably composed much earlier) and a new edition of the six earlier ones.
- 1612 Pierre Troterel, Les corrivaux.
- 1616 La comédie de proverbes.
- c. 1620? Manuscript translation of Giordano Bruno's Il Candelajo.
- 1620 Pierre Troterel, Gillette (written summer 1619).
- 1624 Anon (Alexandre Hardy?), Les ramoneurs (between 1624 and 1626).
- 1624 Jean Godard: new edition.
- 1625 Alexandre Hardy: Le jaloux (text does not survive).
- 1626 Odet de Turnèbe: Les contens, new edition (first published 1584), under the title Les desguisez.
- 1629 Pierre Corneille, Mélite (acted in the season 1629-30).

In a way, the chart is unfair, because it includes new editions and reprints; but even reprints show the interest of an age in what is being reprinted. Booksellers then as now were in the trade to stay in business. There are one or two other scraps of evidence: in the 1626 edition of Turnèbe's Les contens (now entitled Les desguisez), the editor Charles Maupas writes that many people have admired the play so much that they have been making copies of it by hand.¹ And besides Le jaloux, Alexandre Hardy almost certainly wrote other comedies that do not survive.² In general, we have a picture of an age from which almost nothing survives to us but where activity is apparent. We see Pierre de Laudun d'Aigaliers writing his comedy in 1597, Les ramoneurs in 1624, Hardy's Le Jaloux in 1625, Pierre Troterel parodying the genre (as we shall see) in 1612 and 1619 (and you do not parody a genre if your audience is not familiar with the real thing). It looks very much as though essential texts are missing, possibly a large number of them. Why? The answer may well lie in the financial and administrative arrangements of the theatre and of the equivalent of copyright at the turn of the century. Paradoxically,

¹ Cf. Odet de Turnèbe, Les contens, ed. Spector, p. xiv.

² Cf. Les ramoneurs, ed. Gill, pp. lviii-lxii.

it seems that when the theatre became established enough in France for regular troupes to appear, for the theatre to become a profession, publication immediately and as a direct result became less easy. Mme Deierkauf-Holsboer has shown how Hardy was specifically legally debarred, in his contracts with the troupes, from publishing his plays, while the troupes themselves (who would hold the manuscript) would have little interest in publishing a play after its first stage success was past. As for the manuscript copies, these are notoriously ephemeral and may quite easily all have disappeared, like the composing copies, supposed to have existed, of medieval and Renaissance music.

However that may be, let us look at the comedies that do survive. François Perrin and Jean Godard, isolated from the circle of d'Amboise and his friends, need not concern us long here. Structural elements in their plays will be dealt with in greater detail below. Briefly, Perrin's curious Les escoliers is the work of a provincial churchman, with wide interests like his fellow-churchman Larivey, but ^{without} Larivey's zest. Besides Les escoliers, he wrote a collection of sonnets; a tragedy Sichem ravisseur; a tragedy Jephté which may have been a translation from Buchanan but is now lost;¹ and a history of his own city of Autun, "anciene

¹ One of the poems printed in Sichem ravisseur, by J.B. Dardault, is headed "Sur la tragedie de Jephte traduite par Monsieur Perrin".

capitale des Gaules", never published, and also now lost. The volume containing his plays¹ is an inelegant piece of printing by Guillaume Chaudière, the dedications, liminary verse and title-pages haphazardly arranged. Only one copy of the first, 1589, edition, survives today, and even that was not known to the 19th century editor of Les escoliers, Paul Lacroix, who worked from a manuscript copy made by Soleinne (now in the Bibliothèque Nationale).² Les escoliers itself is a slight piece of writing, an elaborated, somewhat humourless farce with elements of the Italianate conventions of Perrin's predecessors. It may date from earlier than 1589, as Perrin says that he searched it out from "un grand fatras de vieux papiers". There seems to be no internal evidence of date.

Les desguisez, published in 1594 in Godard's Ouvres,³ may also date from earlier than its publication: there seems to be no internal evidence which would date it more precisely. It is a product of the Midi: Godard, though a Parisian by birth, lived in

¹ Sichen ravisseur, tragedie extraite du Genese trente quatriesme Chapitre. Par François Perrin Autunois. Paris, Guillaume Chaudiere, 1589.

² Cf. Bibliography.

³ Les œuvres de Jean Godard, Parisien. Two vols., Lyon, Pierre Landry, 1594. Les desguisez, vol. 2, pp. 91-208.

the South, published his book in Lyon, dedicated it to a Lyon worthy, and set his comedy in Toulouse.¹ He adapts from Ariosto's I Suppositi, the third French writer to do so in the 16th century, and in some ways he deserves more credit for his adaptation than he has sometimes received. According to Cioranescu, the play is dull. But, for instance, Prouventard the braggart captain and Maudolé the braggart valet have scenes which are good theatre, as we shall see, and which are Godard's creation, not Ariosto's.

The interest in Italianate comedy that we discussed in the preceding chapter -- a tradition from which Godard curiously seems to stand aside in many ways, despite his adaptation from Ariosto -- continues into the 17th century with three new comedies by Larivey and a number of translations, dialogues, pictures, and other accessory works. The Larivey comedies, published in 1611,² are in some ways a curious survival from the 16th century, rather than a living product of the early years of the 17th. Larivey says that the plays are ones which he has found, dusty after many years, in his study; he dedicates them to François d'Amboise, to whom he

¹ Not "Valence", as A. Cioranescu states (L'Arioste en France, vol. 1, Paris, 1939, p. 302).

² Trois comedies des six dernieres de Pierre de Larivey Champenois. A l'imitation des anciens [sic] Grecs Latins et Modernes Italiens. A sçavoir: La Constance. Le Fidelle. Et les Tromperies. Troyes, Pierre Chevillot, 1611.

had also dedicated the 1579 collection; and as far as can be judged, the style gives no evidence of a date of composition later than that earlier collection. They are not, however, incongruous in 1611: new editions of the 1579 collection had continuously appeared since then and presumably found a market: in 1597, 1600, and again to accompany the new plays in 1611. The new ones are as close adaptations from the Italian as the old had been.

A continuing interest in Italianate comedy is shown, too, by the three translations which we discussed in the preceding chapter: Angélique, in 1599, from Fornaris' Angelica, possibly made by Larivey; and two translations from Giordano Bruno's Il Candelaio, one printed in 1633, one manuscript and possibly earlier.

Les bravacheries du Capitaine Spavente¹ gives us another glimpse, following Fornaris' Angelica, of the Italian troupes in Paris. The author of this is another stage captain, Francesco Andreini of the Gelosi, whose stage name was "Il Capitano Spavento" and who tells us in his book that it is "una raccolta di tutt' le Iperboli, ch'io soleva dire nella Parte del Capitano Spavento, recitando nelle

¹ Le bravure del capitano Spavento. Divise in molti ragionamenti In forma di Dialogo. Di Francesco Andreini da Pistoia, Comico geloso. Les bravacheries du capitaine Spavente, divisees en plusieurs discours en forme de Dialogue. De Francois Andreini de Pistoie. Comedien de la Compagnie des jaloux. Traductes par I.D.F.P. [Jacques de Fonteny Parisien]. Paris, David le Clerc, 1608.

Publiche, e nelle Private Comedie" — just as the part of Coccodrillo in Angelica probably tells us something about Formaris' stage delivery. The original of the Bravacheries was published in Venice in 1607,¹ a long series of 55 dialogues, of 406 pages. The translation, by Jacques de Fonteny, gives us only the first six dialogues, but the shortening is probably rather a good thing. The six include things that a French audience would certainly know: the famous Miles gloriosus opening about polishing the Captain's armour, which is in Les ramoneurs:

Va de ce pas vers Vulcan mon Armurier, et luy
di de ma part qu'il **face mes armes**, plus claires
que n'est le Soleil quand il est le plus clair,
afin que la splendeur d'icelles oste la veüe aux
regardans²

the proverbial hunger of the valet:

Mon maistre resouvenez vous que l'heure de disner
est quasi passee³.

or the reference to the old French war-horse Bayard (whom Adam de

¹ Le bravure del capitano Spavento; divise in molti ragionamenti In Forma di Dialogo, di Francesco Andreini da Pistoia Comico Geloso, Venice, Giacomo Antonio Somasco, 1607.

² Bravacheries, f. 2.

³ Ibid., f. 21.

la Halle had already put out to graze):¹

[Order my trompette (trumpeter) to rise early on the day of the parade] "et que galoppant son cheval Bayard, il s'en aille par la cité sonnant boutte-selle, boutte-selle, tous à cheval, tous à cheval, tous à cheval"²

or to the old clericus-miles dispute:

Mon maistre changez d'avis, ne mettez à vostre table des docteurs, et des Capitaines, parce que par entre eux ils se rompront la teste, seulement par la preference qui se recherche entre les gend'armes, et les lettrez.³

Jacques de Fonteny dedicated the book to a real-life captain, Charles d'Angenes, "Capitaine des cent Gentils-hommes de la maison du Roy, et Colonel general de l'infanterie Italienne".

Another real-life captain, "Le Capitaine Lasphrise", otherwise Marc de Papillon, produced a by-product of our comic tradition in 1599 (though probably written by 1597): La nouvelle

¹ "Or est Bayard en la pâture"; Rondeaux, ed. J. Chailley, Paris, 1942, no. 8; cf. forthcoming edition, The lyric works of Adam de la Halle, ed. N. Wilkins, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, vol. 44, 1967, no. 9.

² Bravacheries, f. 9.

³ Ibid., f. 27.

tragicomique.¹ It is a work without parallel, as far as I know, in its time -- indeed, possibly in any time. Papillon was a man who in an age when the gab of the stage braggart was known to every educated person, and to a good many who were not, could write such a gab about himself:

Que je n'ay redouté ni l'onde glaciale,
Ni celle dont l'ardeur d'une autre n'est esgale ...
... etc. ... etc. ...
Vous m'en estes témoins, rencontre de Dormant,
Ou je fus vox tuant, en pourpoint, pesle-mesle;
Le Vernay, Vymory, Fossé de La Rochelle,
Vous, monde d'escarmouche, assauts de Lusignan,
Danfrons, Saint-Lo, Brouage et Fontenay, Maran,
Saincte, Mesle, La Meure et villes dauphinoises,
La Gascogne et Thetis ...²

or this Cartel:

Cartel Envoyé aux ennemis à Boutteville par des
Capitaines mes compagnons et moy. Par le Capitaine
Lasphrise.

Vous autres qui vivez ...
Nous sommes six soldats au Service du Roy
Qui vous irons trouver vous donnant notre foy, [original:
nous donnant votre foy]
Pour vous combattre hardis avec espée et cappe.
Six de vous soient donc prêts, pour acquerir honneur.

¹ Les premières œuvres poétiques du Capitaine Lasphrise.
Two vols., Paris, Jean Gesselin, 1599 (privilege 31 Jan. 1597). La
nouvelle tragicomique, vol. 2, pp. 635-657; reprinted in Ancien théâtre
français (cf. bibliography), vol. VII, pp. 463-491.

² Ancien théâtre français, VIII, p. 465.

"C'est toujours au danger que reluisit la valeur
 "Mais il est bien heureux qui de nos mains echappe."¹

The braggart in his play, however, Furcifer, is hardly one at all. People call him a "vaillant gendarme", an "asseuré brigand si plein d'artifice", but he had no gab, none of the usual attributes. He escapes retribution at the end, however, like most Renaissance braggarts. — The play itself has an extraordinary, quite possibly a unique, structure. Papillon says at the beginning

Je n'ensuy en cette œuvre icy
 la façon de l'ardeur antique

and indeed he does not. But nor does he simply imitate the farces. We are given a lament on a friend's death, with ideas on vengeance typical of the most Senecan of tragedies ("Par vengeance on connoist le cœur d'amour parfait"); the consultation of a magician in a remote valley; an action which moves from a house outside Paris, to the valley, to the gates of Paris, to an inn in Paris, to a prison; and although there is no prologue, on four occasions characters (different ones) turn and speak to the audience, commenting on the action:

Hospes:

Si jamais on a veu une ame perturbée,
 Il fallait voir Griffon ...

¹ Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Fr. 24450, f. 84.

Griffon, luy, n'est plus luy, par l'estrange spectacle;
 Il ne dict ni ne faict, car ce triste miracle
 Cloisoit la bouche à tous qui sont sortis de là;
 Puis enfin, souspirant, au traistre ainsi parla.¹

There is no act-division — indeed, no division at all — and the play is shorter than most 5-act plays and longer than most farces. Papillon seems to use his title as a blanket term to cover as varied a collection of dramatic whims as the Renaissance ever produced. — One amusing idea of Papillon's is to call the watch by the name of Rabelais' Chicanoux, that is, people who are paid to receive blows and who never deal them.

With the two "comedies" of Pierre Troterel, *Sieur d'Aves*, Les corrivaux of 1612 and Gillette of 1620, we come to a different kind of theatre. By their subject-matter, they are farces; they are certainly indecent and make little demand on the intellect. But they are structurally rather more than farces. H.C. Lancaster saw merit enough in them to regret their immorality.² And if we are interested in the kinds of theatrical convention current in France in the opening years of the 17th century, the two plays take on a new interest. They appear to take for granted the conventions of

¹ Ancien théâtre français, VII, pp. 486-7.

² H.C. Lancaster, French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, part I, vol. 1, Baltimore, 1929, p. 144.

comedy to such an extent that they become parodies of the genre. A knowledge of those conventions is assumed in the audience (or reader). Les corrivaux, for example, has an Advertissement au Lecteur mocking that part of comic theory which claims a moral function for comedy:

Lecteur sçachés que je n'ay pas composé ceste folastre comédie, pour t'apprendre à suivre le vice: car il n'y a rien au monde que j'abhorre tant. Et te jure de bonne ame que je hay plus que la peste ceux qui le suivent. Le subject donc, pour lequel je l'ay composée, est à fin qu'en y voyant sa noirceur si bien depeinte, tu t'animes à suivre la vertu. Ainsi les anciens Romains faisoient ivrer leur serviteurs et esclaves, devant leurs enfants, à fin qu'en contemplant leurs vilaines actions, ils apprinsent à fuir la brutalle yvrongnerie, et les autres vices qui la suivent.

Troterel's tongue-in-cheek claim for the uplifting nature of his play can best be savoured only if you know the piece of theory behind it.

A prologue, spoken by a braggart, begins the play. But this standard piece of comic structure is interrupted by someone (Le Caché) behind the curtain of the stage: this is surely aimed at an audience familiar with the usual uninterrupted prologue. And again, once the play starts, we find that there is not just one braggart, but two or even three. And so on. Whether we consider these things as variations on the conventions, as in the earlier comedies, or as

parodies making fun of them, it seems that familiarity with those conventions can still, in 1612 and 1620, be assumed.

With Les ramoneurs, we are back in the main stream of comedy, with a play (as we saw above) probably typical of a number that no longer survive. Whereas Troterel had parodied the conventions and had been heavily influenced by the farces, this play merely assumes the conventions and is as different from the farces as any comedy of the 1570's or 1580's. Professor Gill had discussed it in some detail in his edition, and we shall examine a number of features later; but perhaps one point should be made here. Les ramoneurs dates from at earliest the 1623-4 season. Corneille's Mélite dates from the 1629-30 season, at most six years later. Corneille claimed that his play was written in a kind of dramatic wilderness; but Les ramoneurs shows that this is simply untrue. It is a lively play (and as Professor Gill has shown probably written for the professional theatre of the time) and one whose features are clearly traditional; the characters, the prose form performance by the traditional farce-actors at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the immorality, the structure of its plot. It is against this tradition, surely, that the audiences of 1629-30 saw Pierre Corneille's new comedy Mélite.

There can be no doubt that Mélite did in fact inaugurate a new type of comedy in France; the fact is, though, that the newness

does not lie where Corneille claimed that it did, in his Examen of the play:

On n'avoit jamais veu jusques-là que la Comedie fist rire sans Personnages ridicules comme les valets boufons, les Parasites, les Capitans, les Docteurs, etc. Celle-cy faisoit son effet par l'humour enjouée de gens d'une condition au dessus de ceux qu'on voit dans les Comedies de Plaute et de Terence, qui n'estoient que des Marchands.¹

Mélite's aim is not to make us laugh; nor does it avoid conventional characters, since the nurse is utterly traditional, Philandre has more than a touch of the braggart soldier about him, and Corneille admits that Eraste's madness is a traditional theatrical device (though not of comedy); nor is there any dramatic significance in any social differences that there may be.

The novelty lies in a new ethic of love. Before Corneille, the love-affairs that formed the core of the plot (when the plays were not frankly immoral like L'Eugène and La tresorière especially) were so bound up with Renaissance social structure that the parents of the young people themselves played an important part in the plays. Here, that social structure has been relegated to the background, so that Mélite's mother does not appear, though her

1

Pierre Corneille, Mélite, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre. Lille and Geneva, 1950, p. 136.

approval is still necessary for a marriage, and the action concerns only the young people and is conducted according to the précieux love-ethic familiar in the salons of Madame de Rambouillet and her successors. Consequently, there can be no peril of the old familiar kind; no relation or friend of the family as a *deus ex machina*. The emphasis has changed, from dealing with external perils to examining the affections of the characters. Hence the unified, even claustrophobic plot, hence the dignified alexandrines, hence too the emphasis on individuality in the different kinds of affections. Some characteristics survive from earlier, such as the nurse and the braggart parts of Philandre's character; the convention of staging with décor simultané; the epilogue spoken by the nurse. But they are externals, and it is clear that a new type of comedy has begun — new, but not in the ways that Corneille claimed.

II THE STAGE

The stages that were used for French Renaissance comedies are very much a matter for deduction from indirect evidence. The iconographical sources that survive are only partly relevant, because they refer only to other, though related, genres: to Terence's plays as illustrated in Renaissance editions, to farces, and to Italian comedies. Something can be gained from medieval illustrations, even though they are before our period, and from the *Mémoire de Mahelot*, even though it is after it. The rise of the professional troupes provides information in archives mainly from the end of the 16th century onwards. And finally the plays themselves, if we look at them in detail, consistently imply certain kinds of staging. All this evidence taken together, scattered though it is, does eventually provide a coherent picture of the comic stage within our period.

1. Illustrated editions of Terence.

The woodcuts in Renaissance editions of Terence have recently been exhaustively discussed by T.E. Lawrenson and Helen Purkis.¹ Their work shows above all that as the woodcut in

¹ T.E. Lawrenson and Helen Purkis, 'Les éditions illustrées de Térence dans l'Histoire du théâtre', Le Lieu théâtral à la Renaissance, ed. J. Jacquot, Paris, 1964, pp. 1-23 and plates I-VIII.

Renaissance printed books is an art-form of its own, these illustrations too must be regarded in the first place as examples of that art-form. Renaissance woodcuts were decorations, integrated into the design of the printed page, often copied or combined or used again as the output of printed books increased in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. So these illustrations of Terence's plays were copied and adapted from edition to edition, the 1545 Venice edition for example still using variants of woodcuts found in the 1493 Lyons one. They are decorations, examples of an art form and not necessarily representative of actual stage conditions of the Renaissance.

Professor Lawrenson and Miss Purkis distinguish three kinds of stage shown in these illustrations to the early editions: an entire theatrum shown in a certain number of frontispieces; a straight row of domi; and a group of domi projecting forward into the centre of the picture. All three represent something theatrically simple: a platform with, at the back, up to five compartments. There is no elaboration of what the compartments are meant to be; there are no windows, no balconies, or the like, nothing to indicate a difference between one kind of building and another.

Upon this pattern is imposed, towards the middle of the 16th century, the Serlian design of a neutral space surrounded by stage elements on three sides: a city street, with representations

of houses and city buildings. Such a design first appears in the Terentian illustrations in the 1545 Venice edition, while woodcuts showing the older pattern still continue to appear, and by 1614 we have the first edition of Terence using only the Serlian type of design.¹ Serlio's work was first published in France in 1545; we shall return to it later.

How far, then, are these woodcuts sources of information about 16th century theatre design, in particular for comedy? It is apparent that a too literal interpretation of them is dangerous. But there are two ways at least in which they are relevant to the 16th century stage, and in particular to comedy.

First, an artist, even if interested primarily in the design of a printed book, does not produce a picture from nothing. We will be quite justified in looking to the theatre for some inspiration. Professor Lawrenson elsewhere rightly looks to the medieval mystery play for some of the inspiration:

Firstly, the period of Terentian illustration is that of the mystery play. Secondly, the concept of house in the comedies of Terence and the mansion would easily be allied in the mind of the illustrator. Thirdly, whenever the houses in the Terence illustrations jut forward they are virtually identical with

¹ The woodcuts in this 1614 edition by Jean de Tournes, are curious in that they had already existed a half-century earlier, since 1556. It is possible that they were even then intended for an edition of Terence, but this is unproven. Cf. Lawrenson and Purkis, op. cit., p. 17, n. 32.

the baldaquin type of mystery compartment. Fourthly, the labelled houses in the illustrations resemble the écriteaux of the mystery; and fifthly [rows of mystery mansions can resemble an arcade such as those in the Terentian illustrations].¹

The complex medieval mystery and passion play sets, though, used much more than mere curtains for their domi; some, such as Hell and the Sea of Galilee in the Valenciennes set, are very complex. Why, then, were these Terentian woodcuts so simplified? Partly, certainly, as a kind of abstract systematisation of the action of the play (Badius wrote, for Trechsel's 1943 edition, "Effecimus ut etiam illiterati ex imaginibus quas cuilibet scenae praeposuimus, legere atque accipere possint comica argumenta"); but partly also, I think, because the theatre of the time which may have influenced them included not only mystery and passion plays but also farces and sotties, whose stages were much simpler.² The late 15th century, when the early illustrated editions of Terence were produced, was, after all, the golden age of the farce. Whether as isolated pieces or as parts of a more extended play, farces were at the time of the

¹ T.E. Lawrenson, The French stage in the 17th century, Manchester, 1957, p. 52.

² The distinction between farce and sottie need not detain us here, where we are discussing only the question of staging. Cf. Ian Maxwell, French farce and John Heywood, Melbourne, 1946, pp. 18-20.

Trechsel edition the only flourishing comic theatrical form in France; and they were, of course, much simpler than mystery and passion plays and, as we shall see, performed on more primitive stages. It may well be that the simplicity of the farce stage had some influence on the illustrations to the new editions of classical comedy.

The early editions, and Trechsel's in particular, were humanist productions with a pedagogical aim. The stages they show, as we saw, are in the first place systematisations of Terence's comedies; secondly (and loosely) they derive from contemporary stages; and thirdly they correspond (in an even looser fashion) to humanist ideas of the classical stage (ideas about five entrances, etc.). The parallel with the nature of the first native French comedies is remarkable: Jodelle and his immediate successors are also humanists, with serious aims even if not pedagogues; they imitate above all the contemporary stage, that is the farces; and only very loosely imitate the classical models for which they enthuse. In the stage practice of the 1550's, as with the illustrated editions of Terence sixty years earlier, the attraction of the farces does seem to have been stronger than the attraction of classical models.

Secondly, whatever stages may have actually been used for Renaissance comedies, any cultivated member of the audience of such

comedies cannot but have had these woodcuts in mind. Terence's plays, as we have seen, were part of every gentleman's education, and they were studied doubtless in these illustrated editions, so that plays in a classical genre, such as the Pléiade's comedies, would inevitably call these woodcuts to mind. They would, then take their place within the close relationship of author and audience, in the small humanist and Court circles of the 1550's.

2. Farces.

It is remarkable how large a number of engravings, woodcuts and paintings are inspired by Renaissance farces in France and the Low Countries: quite a large proportion of the whole iconographical evidence for French Renaissance stage design. This proportion, though, probably does not correspond to theatrical reality. Once again, we are dealing not with any kind of deliberate historical record of the theatre, but with the fine arts: a fashion of painting probably accounts for the large number of these pictures, just as at other times fashions for still-lives or landscapes produced large numbers of paintings of those kinds. The simplicity and vigour of the farce stages may well have appealed and so begun this particular fashion. Other theatrical genres attracted less attention from artists, even though we know from other sources that in terms of the actual theatre they were as important as farces:

religious plays still, but particularly formal tragedy and comedy.

But whereas the Terentian woodcuts gave us little reliable evidence about actual stages, these pictures of farces are probably rather nearer reality. The pictures all show a simple, even primitive platform stage.¹ The tiny painting in the Cambrai set of part-books,² the 'Playerwater' detail,³ and the pictures of Tabarin,⁴ all show trestles supporting the stage. Such stages were, then, portable; and indeed, it was essential to the early professional troupes, before their establishment in Paris, that they and their equipment should be mobile. The earliest known travelling professional troupe, at Rouen in 1556, specifically performed farces as part

¹ Such a stage is probably the descendant of a single element of the multiple décor of elaborate religious productions. In Fouquet's Martyre de Sainte Apolline, the maisons are already independent, with their own stage and roof, and very like the farce stages of these later pictures. This origin is the more likely since farces were in fact acted as part of such religious productions. I am indebted for this suggestion to the unpublished thesis of A. Hindley, The Development and diffusion of farce in France towards the end of the Middle Ages (University of Hull, 1965), p. 349.

² Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 126, vol. II, f. 53. Reproduced in L. Moussinao, Le théâtre, Paris, 1957, p. 123. 4. fig. 6.

³ Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Detail of a painting attributed to Pieter Balten. Reproduced *ibid.*, p. 197. 4. fig. 7.

⁴ Two engravings, reproduced respectively in Moussinao, *op. cit.*, p. 161, and in W.L. Wiley, The early public theatre in France, (Cambridge, Mass., 1960, pl. 10.

of its repertory.¹ The equipment is rudimentary, generally including a curtain at the back. In the first two cases above, there is an area behind the curtain from which actors may appear. A table and chair, and musical instruments in the case of Tabarin, are all the properties used, though others are referred to in the texts of farces. The beauty of the Cambrai painting is that it catches perfectly the atmosphere of one side of this kind of performance: sadness and desolation, dusk approaching, very few spectators. The other pictures have mostly emphasised the other side: lively but cheap and brash fairground entertainment, paid for by collection and not by admission, often linked with commerce, as in the 'Orvietan' print.² The sadness is familiar to us today from Chaplin and from a whole tradition of music-hall; the brashness we still see set against that sadness, as in Les Enfants du paradis.

Can these farce pictures tell us anything about the stage for Renaissance comedies? Again, I think, primarily in the context of author-audience relationship. Farces were the only thriving comic

¹ Cf. Wiley, op. cit., pp. 37-9.

² Reproduced, for example, in Allardyce Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and miracles [1931], New York, 1963, p. 225. (A group of figures on the left of the stage are not spectators, as suggested by Jean Jacquot, La vie théâtrale au temps de la Renaissance, Paris, 1963, p. 42; an inscription above their heads makes it clear that they are a group of actors, 'extras'.) Cf. fig. 8.

form in the French theatre of the mid-16th century, and their stages must therefore have been known to the audiences of the Pléiade comedies, plays which are themselves, as we have seen, so similar to the farces. Sebillet and Du Bellay certainly knew them and referred to them, the one to approve and the other to condemn. Jodelle's L'Eugène, the first French Renaissance comedy, really needs no more in the way of stage design than does a typical farce.

Indeed, in a sense, it seems to require less: for the text of the farces themselves often seems to suggest more complex stages than the pictures of farces ever show. We may take as an example one from the Recueil Trepperel, the Farce à trois personnages: Le savetier, le sergent et la laitière,¹ which the editors date in the 1480's or 1490's: this play seems to demand two distinct 'compartments' and a neutral 'street' space, for example at ll. 14 and 81 'estes vous leans', l. 88 'en ma maison', and l. 195 'hors de mon repaire'. The Farce du porteur d'eau, probably dating from the 1530's,² seems to need more still: each of the three secondary

¹ Le Recueil Trepperel, ed. E. Droz and H. Lewicka, Geneva, 1961 (Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance XLV), pp. 25-40.

² Text in E. Fournier, Le théâtre français avant la Renaissance, Paris, 1872 [reprinted New York, 1966(?)], pp. 456-60. Dating from Maxwell, French farce and John Heywood, p. 131.

characters (the entremetteur, the amoureuse and her mother) seems to have his or her own compartment, and all four seem to move every few lines from compartment to compartment. At one point they even go to church to be married: "Ils s'en vont à l'église et estant revenus le porteur d'eau commence à dire ..." Improvisation^t is easier, though, at such high speed; and since the progress of time is treated with the scantest respect of any play I know ("Car o'est demain, vous le savez,/ Qu'il nous faut aller à l'église./ Soyons, d'une façon exquize,/ Tous deux fort bien accommodés./ Voilà le dimanche venu ..."¹), there is little reason to suppose that any very great respect for staging is necessary.² So also, surely, for Le savetier, le sergent et la laitière, and for Renaissance farces in general; but it would not necessarily be right to conclude that it is also so for the more learned genre of Renaissance comedy. We shall return to this point.

Another pictorial genre that awaits proper comment is the woodcut illustrations to early editions of farces. So few of these

¹ P. 459.

² A. Hindley, The Development and diffusion of farce, pp. 328-44, comes to the same conclusion on the same grounds: that the texts of the farces seem to suggest complex sets, but that since the pictorial evidence forbids our taking them literally, we are forced to the conclusion of improvisation on simple stages.

have been published that it is difficult to draw solid conclusions; but from the title pages of the *Recueil Trepperel*,¹ from the illustrations to *Pathelin* and others in the British Museum, it does seem that in general the pictures are drawn as though the scenes were happening in life and not in a theatre. The woodcut in *Le savetier, le sergent et la laitière*, for example, shows grass and a flower, and a horse in the background, and so tells us little about the stage.² Like the Terentian illustrations, these woodcuts were doubtless primarily intended as part of the design of a printed page, and scarcely at all as illustrations of stages.

3. Italian comedies.

With the arrival of the Italian troupes in France from 1571, a new kind of theatrical illustration appears: engravings, woodcuts and paintings of the Italian comedy. This pictorial genre is to some extent less clear-cut than either the Terentian woodcuts or the farce pictures; but being (at this early date at least) less formulated as an artistic genre than either of them, we may perhaps rely on these pictures rather more to find out about actual stage sets.

They are of two kinds: first the engravings and woodcuts

¹ Ed. cit.

² *Recueil Trepperel*, ed. cit., p. 29.

found in the Recueil Fossard, the Compositions de Rhétorique (Lyons, 1601) and in isolated sources of a similar kind; and second, apparently of a different nature, paintings of groups of actors on stage. The first clearly represents the commedia dell'arte in France; and as we move into the 17th century, the integration of Italian commedia dell'arte actors and French farce actors, begun already in the 1570's with Agnan Sarat and his troupe, becomes more apparent in them.

The second kind is less farcical, more dignified. But the division is not sharp: some paintings of this second kind are certainly derived from Fossard engravings, and it is even possible that all of them are.¹ However, it may also be that some at least of these paintings represent not the commedia dell'arte, but performances of a commedia erudita or of some other genre — not necessarily other actors, but the same actors in different roles. I have not seen this suggestion made, but it seems probable: the first Italian troupes in France, we know, performed in both styles of acting. In that case, for instance, the pictures often referred to as the earliest representations of the commedia dell'arte — one

¹ As, indeed, Charles Sterling has suggested in his article; see below.

in private possession in Paris,¹ the other in the Musée Carnavalet, Paris² — could equally well be pictures of learned comedy. The very essence of commedia dell'arte improvisation has meant that we know very little of its precise characteristics; but from the ease with which Fornaris, for example, could insert his character of Coccodrillo into a learned comedy, the two kinds of acting do not seem to have been so very far distant from each other, and were certainly practised by the same actors.

Most of the surviving paintings have been closely discussed in an article by Charles Sterling,³ whose conclusion is that as a group they are derived from engravings such as those in the Recueil Fossard. This is demonstrable for paintings in the New York Metropolitan Museum at Rennes and at Béziers, which all show groups of actors in Italian comedy-scenes. The paintings have stylistic

¹ Reproduced in Nicoll, Masks, mimes and miracles, fig. 224; a group of seven actors, including an old man with cuckold's horns, without stage setting.

² Reproduced in Wiley, The early public theater, fig. 1; a group of five actors, with two other figures in the wings, with a plain curtain as background.

³ 'Early paintings of the Commedia dell'arte in France', Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1953. pp. 11-32.

affinities and generally show Flemish characteristics, so that once again we have to some extent a defined artistic genre. The engravings are not discussed by Sterling, and would need a separate study, as far as I know not yet written.

One painting in the Musée Municipal at Bayeux particularly concerns us here. Dated by Sterling from the costumes at 1570-4, it shows a group of eleven actors in the foreground, one of whom wears the costume of Pantalone.¹ Behind them is a second group of nine people difficult to identify: Possibly further actors, or, as Sterling suggests, a courtly audience. No engraving like it is known, only a water-colour in the Hennin collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes,² showing only the front group and possibly deriving from an identical source. The most interesting feature is the background: a facade with an arch in the centre showing a view in perspective — precisely as in the Teatro Olimpico stage at Vicenza. It is the only surviving Renaissance picture in France of such a stage set in the straight theatre.³

The other paintings, and the Fossard prints and the

¹ Reproduced in Lawrenson, The French stage, fig. 29.

² Vol. XII, f. 34; cf. Sterling, op. cit., p. 29.

³ Sets with facades are, of course, found (cf. Lawrenson, ...)

Compositions de Rhétorique all have either no background, or a simple curtain, or mere rudiments of the Serlian design such as the houses indicated on right and left in some of the engravings.

The Italian companies who came to France, then, from the 1570's onwards, would seem from the pictures to have used surprisingly simple sets. One picture only (the painting at Bayeux) has a façade-type set with a scene behind it in perspective, as in the Teatro Olimpico; some only of the engravings in the Recueil Fossard and Compositions de Rhétorique have variants, and those primitive indeed, of Serlio's design. Otherwise, only back curtains are shown. Yet the learned comedies that existed by the hundred in Italy and some of which the actors brought with them demand more complex sets than these: Bibbiena's La Calandria, for instance, played at Lyon in 1548. In Italy, and doubtless in France too, more must have been provided. Serlio himself, whose comic scene is doubtless related to the sets actually used for such comedies, was in France from 1550 to 1554; if that was so, surely performances such as that of Alamanni's Flora at Fontainebleau in 1555 must have used more than a simple back curtain or the primitive

... The French stage, passim), but only in genres such as entries and ballets, never in the straight theatre. -- Sterling (p. 19) considers it a normal commedia dell'arte set, but he does not refer to, and appears to ignore, the view in perspective through the central arch.

structures seen in the Compositions de Rhétorique.

It may well be that a troupe with fair financial backing, such as the Confidenti playing for the Duc de Joyeuse, would have used some form of Serlio's design but that no pictures of such performances have survived. As we have seen, the iconographical evidence forms so much a part of the world of the fine arts, and it may easily be that such performances did not find their artists. We should at any rate not rule the possibility out on methodological grounds, since there is internal evidence in the plays themselves to support the idea of developed stage design and not simply a back curtain. I shall return to discuss the type of set involved after examining the plays and their requirements in detail.¹

4. Medieval stage sets, Serlio, and the Mémoire de Mahelot.

The question arises: how far are Serlio's designs, and the drawings in the Mémoire de Mahelot, survivals from medieval stage design? Jean Jacquot sees a continuity in Mahelot, and emphasises the Italianate nature of his drawings: "Il a parfaitement assimilé

¹ As far as I know, there exists no study of the stage requirements of Italian learned comedies, using internal evidence. The one overall study of the genre, M.T. Herrick's Italian comedy IN THE Renaissance, Urbana, 1960, discusses the plays only as literature, with very little reference to staging. Such a study would be valuable for the history of the Renaissance theatre, and would be particularly solid in that a very large number of texts survive.

les principes du décor 'à l'italienne'",¹ while mentioning medieval elements such as "'mansions' à claire-voie révélant un intérieur d'un caractère encore très médiéval".² Professor Lawrenson, while not denying possible medieval elements in Mahelot, categorically denies the Serlio-Mahelot link: "There is not one set which could even remotely be conjectured to be a direct imitation of Serlio."³ The balance between medieval and neo-classical designs is in fact a delicate one, both in France and in Italy. We have seen how a humanists' edition of Terence could give illustrations recalling the sets for mystery plays and farces. We have seen, too, how in France the farce still flourished in the 1550's, though by then a static genre, and influenced the Pléiade; and how outside the comic theatre, as late as 1547 a wholly typical medieval set could still be used for the Valenciennes passion play. All the medieval genres -- and hence presumably the stage designs associated with them -- continued throughout the century, at the same time as the Renaissance genres gained their footing. Neo-classical designs flourished overwhelmingly in what

¹ La vie théâtrale, p. 160.

² Ibid.

³ The French stage, p. 87.

Professor Lawrenson calls 'para-theatricals': entries, mascoarades, ballets and the like: is not the reason for this that the 'para-theatricals' were new genres, open to new ideas of design, whereas the 'straight' theatre, however new some genres such as tragedy might appear to be, remained still in a medieval tradition?

The kinds of neo-classical design, derived from Italy, are especially applicable to the straight theatre. First, the façade with a number of doors in it (five according to theory) with parts of a set built in perspective behind the doors and visible through them. This, above all, is still visible in the Teatro Olimpico at Vicenza. ^(cf. fig. 13) For the French theatre (not 'para-theatricals'), as we saw, there exists only one picture of this kind of set: that at Bayeux.

The other kind is in the designs associated with the name of Serlio. These first appeared in France in the translation by Jean Martin in 1545.¹ Serlio himself came to France in 1541 and stayed until his death in 1554 — that is, he was in France at the time of the first performance of Jodelle's comedies L'Eurène and

¹ Il primo libro d'architettura [Il secondo libro di prospettiva] di Sebastiano Serlio ... Le premier livre d'architecture [Le second livre de perspective] de Sebastian Serlio ... mis en langue francoyse par Jehan Martin, Paris, 1545. Cf. fig. 12.

La rencontre. Serlio discusses the three types of décor specified by Vitruvius (tragic, comic and satyric) and gives illustrations of model designs for each type, with emphasis on the principles of perspective. The back of the stage, for example, should be higher by one-ninth than the front.¹

But these designs, though they have the trappings of the Renaissance in their palaces, cities, North Italian Renaissance towers, and so on, seem in their essence to be derived from the medieval theatre. Nowhere in Vitruvius or other classical sources is there any reference to a central neutral space with buildings (or forests), supposedly realistic, on three sides;² whereas such an idea is perfectly reconcilable with medieval stage design. The Valenciennes stage, though more spread out, uses the principle^(cf. fig. 11). So does the set shown in Fouquet's picture of the martyrdom of Saint Apolline.

¹ Serlio, op. cit., Paris, 1545, p. 65: "communément il se faict une platte forme, eslevée de terre en sa partie de devant au nyveau de nostre veue, et la partie de derriere plus haulte seulement d'une neufiesme part."

² Cf. Jean Jacquot, La vie théâtrale, p. 109: "Le souci [de la part de Serlio] de se conformer à Vitruve est d'autant plus curieux que la scène serlienne, avec sa grande ouverture centrale, n'a plus rien de commun avec la scène antique, avec sa façade ornée de colonnes et de statues et percées de trois ouvertures. Il n'est pas moins curieux de voir Jean Martin, dans son Vitruve, reproduire le plan du théâtre latin par Fra Giocondo, puis, sans explication, les trois types de décor de Serlio, qui résument la pratique des théâtres de la Renaissance. On n'aurait su admettre avec plus de désinvolture le divorce de la théorie et de la pratique."

Serlio's designs are not new, but reworkings of an old principle.

In France in the late 16th century, Serlio's designs, even if consistently hailed as neo-classical, would have had an air of familiarity about them. For contemporary audiences, they would be a continuation of the medieval theatre, in a different guise. That some version of them was in fact used will appear from examination of the plays themselves.

The next major pictorial document for the French theatre is the *Mémoire de Mahelot*,¹ nearly one hundred years after Serlio's designs. Professor Laurensen insists that Mahelot's sets are not directly related to Serlio, on the grounds that the essence of a Mahelot set is the independence of each separate compartment, whereas Serlio's sets are designed as unified wholes.² In view of the scanty evidence for the years preceding Mahelot, the question probably cannot be finally settled.³ But the essence of a Mahelot set does not in fact necessarily lie in the independence of the relationship of its components, but rather in the existence of a

¹ Bibliothèque nationale, MS Fr. 24330. Modern edition: *Le Mémoire de Mahelot, Laurent et autres decorateurs*, ed. H.C. Lancaster, Paris, 1920.

² *The French stage*, pp. 86-9.

³ A new edition of the *Mémoire* is in preparation and may bring forward new evidence.

neutral central space surrounded on three sides by stage elements. This is always the basic design in Mahelot, whereas there are not always more than one or two compartments: for example the specification for the anonymous Les trois semblables is simply "Il faut que le theatre soit en pastoralle a la discretion du feinteur",¹ the corresponding drawing being of a single woodland scene; and Hardy's La folie d'Isabelle has one compartment only whose placing on stage is a matter of indifference: "Vous la pouvez mettre au milieu du theatre si vous voulez",² an injunction which is in fact carried out in the drawing. There is no juggling with a number of independent elements in sets such as these.

There is, of course, such a juggling in medieval religious play sets, where the different mansions are in fact a series of different structures — even, in Fouquet's Martyre de Sainte Apolline, a series of different theatres, each with its own stage and roof. We saw above how one of these structures may have given rise to the common type of farce stage. In the mobile religious plays,³ the

¹ Mémoire, ed. Lancaster, p. 79.

² Ibid., p. 74.

³ Which were known to Grévin, writing in 1561: "Et quant à moy je suis de ceste opinion que la Comédie a pris son nom ἀπὸ τῶν γῶμῶν, c'est-à-dire des rues par lesquelles de ce premier temps elles estoyent jouées: et semble qu'encore ceste coustume soit demeurée en ...

different mansions were on separate carts and thus not fixed in any permanent spatial relationship at all. So that to the extent to which Mahelot's sets do involve combinations of pre-existent stage elements, they may be said to be in a medieval tradition.

Each of Serlio's three sets shows this same basic design (of a neutral central space surrounded on three sides by stage elements), and moreover can also be regarded as consisting of a number of compartments, unified by the Italian into a more coherent whole than in some of Mahelot's designs. In all three sets, the idea of compartments as opposed to a less diversified set is neither emphasised nor excluded. His comic scene consists of seven buildings: a church at the back, two houses and an inn (or shop) on the left, and three houses on the right.¹ All seven have doors, and all five houses have windows or balconies (or both) above. The shape of the inn reminds us of the shop in, for instance, the drawing for Durval's Agarite in the Mémoire.² The plays for which he was designing — and

... Flandres, et Pais bas, où les joueurs de Comédies se font trainer par les carrefours sur des chariots et là jouent leurs histoires, Comédies, et farces" (Brief discours: Théâtre complet, ed. L. Pinvert, Paris, 1922, p. 8).

¹ Serlio's text states that the houses are those of bourgeois citizens; that one of them is that of a macquerelle; and that there is a temple and a hostellerie (Serlio, op. cit., Paris, 1545; cf. S.W. Holsboer, L'histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre français de 1600 à 1657, Paris, 1933, pp. 280-1).

² Le Mémoire de Mahelot, ed. cit., pp. 80-1 and drawing.

we know that he had practical experience in Italy -- did demand compartments, and such compartments are perfectly compatible with his sets. So would be the demands made by French comedies of the late 16th century.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that there is a continuity of stage design in France without a break at 1500 or 1550: the medieval designs being modified especially by Serlian ones, themselves medieval but in neo-classical dress, and enriched especially in the early 17th century until we see them again in Mahelot's drawings; iconographical evidence being lacking in between, but some support being found in the plays themselves. The continuity is of course relative. There are so many unknowns, and so many different kinds of staging in existence at this period, that it would be foolish to over-rate the importance of this continuity or indeed to do more than simply state its existence.

5. Performances.

There is no need to recapitulate here the controversy, over half a century old now, to decide whether French Renaissance tragedies and comedies were intended for the stage or the armchair. Lanson's investigations proved finally that the tragedies were in fact performed, while M. Lebègue's Tableau gives us many details

about performances of comedies.¹

The evidence that we have for our particular plays relates mainly to the early ones (up to 1570) and to the late ones (1624-28).

The question of Jodelle's two comedies and their representation, as we saw in the first chapter, is a thorny one in its details. But those details need not concern us here. It is established, on the testimony of Etienne Pasquier, that La rencontre was acted:

Ceste Comedie [La rencontre], et la Cleopatre furent représentées devant le Roy Henry à Paris en l'hostel de Reims, avecq'un grand applaudissement de toute la compagnie: Et depuis encores au College de Boncour, où toutes les fenestres estoient tapissées d'une infinité de personnages d'honneur, et la cour si plaine d'Escoliers que les portes du College en regorgeoient. Je le dy comme celuy qui y estois present avecq'le grand Tornebus en une mesme Chambre. Et les entre-parleurs estoient tous hommes de nom: Car mesme Remy Belleau, et Jean de la Peruse, jouoient les principaux roulets.²

Once, then, at the Hôtel de Reims, once at the Collège de Boncourt; both times, presumably, on a stage prepared or improvised for the occasion. The precise date is uncertain; M. Balmas, in his edition

¹ Cf. esp. E. Rigal, De Jodelle à Molière, Paris, 1911; G. Lanson, 'Etudes sur les origines de la tragédie classique en France', Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, X (1903), 177-231 and 413-6; R. Lebègue, 'Tableau de la comédie française de la Renaissance', Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance, VIII (1946), 278-344.

² Les recherches de la France, Paris, 1611, VI, vii, p. 741.

of L'Eugène, suggests early in 1553, suggesting also that L'Eugène, which he dates very precisely in the last fortnight of September 1552, was probably also represented in a college.¹

Jodelle's example of an integrated performance of a tragedy and a comedy together, in a Royal and academic milieu, was followed by Jacques Grévin a few years later. Problems of dating arise here also. Grévin himself tells us that La tresorière, though put off (for reasons which are not now clear) in 1557, was performed on 5 February 1558 (new style 1559) and Les esbahis on 17 February 1560 (n.s. 1561):

Ceste comedie [La tresorière] fut faicte par le commandement du roi Henry II pour servir aux nopces de madame Claude, duchesse de Lorraine, mais pour quelques empeschemens différée: et depuis mise en jeu à Paris au collège de Beauvais, après la satyre qu'on appelle communément les Veaux, le v. de février M.D.LVIII.²

Ceste comedie [Les esbahis] fut mise en jeu au collège de Beauvais, à Paris, le XVIIIe jour de février M.D.LX après la tragédie de J. César et les Jeux satyriques, appelez communément les Veaux.³

No evidence survives about the staging of La Maubertine, if that

¹ Etienne Jodelle, L'Eugène, ed. E. Balmas, Milan, 1955, pp. 5-12.

² Quoted from Jacques Grévin, Théâtre complet, ed. L. Pinvert, Paris, 1922, pp. 353-4.

³ Ibid., p. 355.

was indeed a third comedy by Grévin (see Appendix B).

Jean-Antoine de Baïf included details of the performance of his Brave on the title page of the first edition:

Le Brave, comedie de Jan Antoine de Baif, jouee
devant le Roy en l'hostel de Guise, à Paris, le
XXVIII de janvier M.D.LXVII.¹

The occasion was an important one, and again, in a Royal and academic setting; again, in a building with, presumably, an improvised stage. The first edition in 1567 gives the 'chantz recitez entre les actes de la comedie' by Ronsard, Baïf himself, Desportes, Philieul and Belleau; but they have already vanished by the 1572 edition.

No performance of L'eunuque is known to us, only a note about its translation: the original manuscript, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, bears the note in a 16th century hand, probably Baïf's own: "achevée Landemain de Noel devant jour 1565." Perhaps it was intended for a Christmas entertainment, or for a performance in the early part of 1566.

External evidence about Pléiade plays, then, gives us a picture of a specifically University milieu, sometimes with University jokes or references (the Protenotaire in Grévin's La tresorière), and with Royal patronage. Jean de la Taille tells us that he and

¹ J.A. de Baïf, Le Brave, Paris, 1567.

his brother Jacques wrote plays in their youth, while students: that is, again, in the milieu of the University of Paris. The stages were presumably prepared for the occasions. There is no reason why they should not have been elaborate: after all, the set at Vicenza was prepared for a single occasion, and we have all seen present day school and University productions whose sets are by no means simple or improvised. External evidence takes us no further.

To these royal and academic performances we should add the performances of Italian plays in royal and aristocratic circles: Bibbiena's La Calandria in 1548 at Lyon, Alamanni's Flora in 1555 at Fontainebleau, Fornaris' Angelica in 1584 at the house of the Duc de Joyeuse at Paris. The first took place in the 'grande salle de Saint-Jean', a high vaulted room in which the set was built by the Italian Nannoccio, of Serlian type, specifically using perspective.¹

Between La Taille and the 1620's, we never know when or where any given comedy — other than Angelica — was performed. Gerard de Vivre tells us that acting in schools is pedagogically

¹ S.W. Holsboer, L'histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre français de 1600 à 1657, Paris 1933, p. 53; Lawrenson, The French stage, p. 126.

effective, even giving stage directions in some detail for performance, and we may perhaps conclude from the many editions of de Vivre's plays (in which stage directions always appeared) that they were found useful for their purpose and so were in fact acted in schools. François d'Amboise tells us that his comedies were "Veües et receües avec un plaisir indicible", but does not say when or where. Gabriel Chappuys makes his Poëte say

La chose représentée au vif ainsi qu'elle ha
esté faite, ha plus d'energie et d'efficace,
que ce qui se declare par parolles.¹

but this is, of course, not conclusive evidence for performance.

M. Lebègue's 'Tableau' includes references to many performances of 'comédies', but the term is notoriously general and can refer to moralities or farces or other genres as well as to strict comedies.

In the British Museum copy of Larivey's Le morfondu, the 1579 edition, the Dramatis personae bears a list of actors in a late 16th or early 17th century hand, which appears to show that the play was acted, but the actors prove difficult to identify. The list is as follows (the two right-hand columns being printed, the rest in manuscript):

¹ Gabriel Chappuys, Les mondes celestes ... de Doni, Lyons, 1583, p. 666.

la motte	PHILIPPES	<u>Amoureux.</u>
micHEL	CLAIRE	<u>Servante.</u>
bretone	LOYS	<u>compagnon de Philippes.</u>
mostier	LAMBERT	<u>serviteur de Philippes.</u>
la fonteine	CHARLES	<u>Amoureux.</u>
fleury	LAZARE	<u>Vieillard.</u>
fonteine	AGNES	<u>sa Servante.</u>
bretone	AGATHE	<u>femme de Joachim.</u>
	BONIFACE	<u>serviteur de Charles.</u>
lancelo	LEGER	<u>Laquais de Lazare.</u>
la motte	JOACHIM	<u>Vieillard.</u>
micHEL	HELAINÉ	<u>Niepce de Lazare.</u>

In the 1630's, a young François de La Motte could act Philippes (but he is otherwise not heard of until 1641); Fleury might be Fleury Jacob, by this time certainly apt for a vieillard's part; Michel could be Michel de La Chappe (d. 1642), whose daughter La Motte later married; La Fonteine could be Etienne Ruffin, called La Fonteine, who was acting up to 1638; Bretone could be Noël Le Breton, called Hauteroche, who was born about 1616. On this assumption, Mostier and Lancelot cannot be identified at all.¹

— One other performance of a play by Larivey or d'Amboise may have been that of the Château de Pougy which we discussed in chapter 1. But in general, the references are very scattered. Perhaps more evidence once existed, and the notoriously ephemeral nature of records of this kind is to blame.

¹ Cf. G. Mongrédien, Dictionnaire biographique des comédiens français du XVII^e siècle, Paris, 1961, passim. I am hoping that M. Mongrédien himself may be able to cast some light on this list.

The performance of comedies in Hardy's time has been ably discussed by Mme Deierkauf-Holsboer in her 'Vie d'Alexandre Hardy' and by Professor Gill in his edition of Les ramoneurs. Their conclusions were, as we saw, that Hardy certainly wrote comedies: and that in fact the very question of 'copyright' in connection with stage performance was probably responsible for the failure of these plays to reach print. It was the troupes of Valleran le Conte and later of Pierre le Messier (Bellerose) and Villiers, with Hardy as poete à gages, that acted such comedies. Supporting this evidence, we know on the testimony of Thomas Platter that Valleran's troupe, in 1599, specifically performed comedies:

A l'hôtel de Bourgogne il y a un comedien nommé Valeran, engagé par le Roi. Il joue tous les jours, après le repas, une comédie en vers français, et débite ensuite une farce sur ce qui peut être arrivé de drôle à Paris, en fait d'amourettes ou d'autres anecdotes du même genre.¹

Platter's distinction between 'comédie en vers français' and 'farce' is quite clear.

Les ramoneurs itself is connected with the Hôtel de Bourgogne: that is, probably with the 'Comédiens du Roi', a company including not only actors of Valleran's kind, but also the three

¹ Translated from the original; cited by Lebègue, 'Tableau', p. 316.

farce actors Gros-Guillaume, Gaultier Garguille, and Turlupin. The author of the play makes the valet Martin say: "Voilà vraiment un bel exemple à vos disciples qui verront représenter l'histoire de ces belles amours dans un hotel de Bourgogne",¹ a line which could have its full effect only in a performance in the Hotel de Bourgogne itself. With this play, indeed, we are returning from conjecture to fact; and it was Mélite, played only some five years later (1629-30), that established (as Corneille tells us in his Examen) the troupe of Montdory at Paris, to begin a period in which the public theatre in France was to come once more to an acknowledged significance.

6. The evidence of the plays: 1550-1570.

The internal evidence of the plays themselves has not, as far as I know, been used before to yield information about stage sets, perhaps because their evidence, as possibly non-dramatic works, has been mistrusted. Let us put this objection aside, for the moment, and examine what information they have to offer; we may then decide upon its value.

For L'Eugène, two compartments only are needed: the houses of Guillaume and of Eugène. I, iii is set inside Guillaume's house

¹ IV, x: ed. Gill, pp. 133-4.

("Mais comment? qui entre céans? / Avez-vous laissé l'huis ouvert?"); it must have been a door through which Messire Jean enters, and it has an upper storey (III,iii). It has a garden (I,iii), but this need not necessarily be represented on stage. Eugène's house needs a door (V, v "Voilà l'abbé et mon Hélène / Devant la porte"; "Sus, entrons"), but no action takes place in the interior. Florimond's house is referred to (V, ii and iv) but need not be on stage. So, short of improvisation, there must be one compartment with an interior; one with only a door; and a neutral space for the street (II, 1).

Jodelle's other comedy, La rencontre, is lost, but we do know something about its staging. Etienne Pasquier says of it:

La Rencontre ainsi appelée parce qu'au gros de la meslange, tous les personnages s'estoient trouvez pesle-mesle casuellement dedans une maison, fuzeau qui fut fort bien par luy demeslé par la closture du jeu.¹

The scene where this confusion takes place, with all the characters within a single house, is presumably shown on-stage, like the scene inside Guillaume's house in L'Eugène. It would be difficult to improvise. Staging clearly is of some importance when the very title and basis of the plot are derived from it.

¹ Les recherches de la France, Paris, 1611, VI, vii, p. 741.

In La tresorière, the Trésorier's house is the only essential compartment: it has a door which is knocked at and used (III, v; IV, iii; etc.), and an upper storey is referred to. The whole play appears to take place outside this house: all action within it is reported. One might suppose from III, iii ("Il est chez le sire Sulpice") that II, iii took place at Sulpice's house; but Constance's appearance in that scene suggests otherwise, that it was rather at the Trésorier's house.

Les esbahis is similarly undemanding. Only one compartment, Gerard's house, is needed. It has a door through which L'Advocat enters and emerges (III, iv; IV, i) and an upper storey (III, v "Je montray jusqu'en la chambrette") which is probably shown on-stage, since Panthaleone appears to deliver his serenades to a window above in II, iii and V, i. II, iii definitely takes place in the street, "devant l'huys du sire Gerard". Otherwise references to place are often imprecise. No action necessarily takes place within Gerard's house. Compartments for Josse and Claude would be possible, but the neutral space could also be used for them. Although, as we saw, there is no a priori reason why a college production should not have an elaborate set, it does appear that Grévin has chosen to make only modest demands on his stage-builders. Unlike Jodelle in both his plays, Grévin does not set any of his action inside a compartment. A single 'flat' with a door and window in it, or even a back curtain

with an aperture, would be adequate for either play.

In La reconnue, action once more takes place inside a compartment. In I, ii, Madame refers to kitchen equipment ("ce chaudron", etc.), so that we are quite definitely inside the kitchen. The kitchen has a door communicating with the rest of the house, since Janne asks for it to be closed in IV, v. There is also a door from the street into the house, which Janne opens; it may lead into the kitchen, but this is not absolutely clear and would in any case be odd on social grounds. There are a room or rooms above (I, ii "Antoinette, descendez") and a window (V, i). One other compartment is essential, the Voisine's house (I, iv-v; IV, iii). There is definitely a neutral street area (act V). An extra compartment for L'Amoureux (IV, vi) would be possible but is not essential. So — again, short of improvisation — the requirements are the same as for L'Eugène: a 'street' area, with two compartments, action taking place within one of them.

The set for Les corrivaux also requires only two compartments, with a street in front. The compartments are Jacqueline's house and Fremin's house, in a residential part of Paris (II, iii "Je m'en vais à la ville"). In III, iii Benard is outside Jacqueline's ("le logis où se tient mon fils") and in III, v, without mention of his having moved, he is outside Fremin's ("Je ne demande autre chose, entron dedans"), so that the houses may be supposed to be near each other in

terms of the play itself. Both of them have doors; Fremin's has a back door as well (I, iii; I, ii; etc.), but it is evidently supposed to be off-stage (III, iii, etc.). Much of the action takes place specifically in the street, and none within the houses. Le Nègromant is of course a translation; but in any case it follows the pattern in requiring two compartments, with a street in front. The two compartments are supposed to be near each other in terms of the play (I, ii); and there is a reference (IV, vi) to "ces maisons prochaines", which may be mere flats.

Baïf's two plays follow the staging requirements of their originals. Le brave in particular requires two compartments: the houses of Taillebras and Bontams (corresponding to those of Pyrgopolynices and Periplectomenus in the Miles gloriosus), but all the action takes place outside them.

The stage requirements of these first comedies, then, are quite consistent. There are five original plays, three translations and the missing La rencontre. The most that is needed is a neutral space with two compartments, with action inside one of them and a door in the other (L'Eugène, La reconnue). The least is a neutral space with one compartment with a door (Grévin's two plays). La Taille's two plays need two compartments, but no action takes place

within them; Jodelle's other play, La rencontre, has action within a compartment but it is possibly the only compartment -- we cannot know.

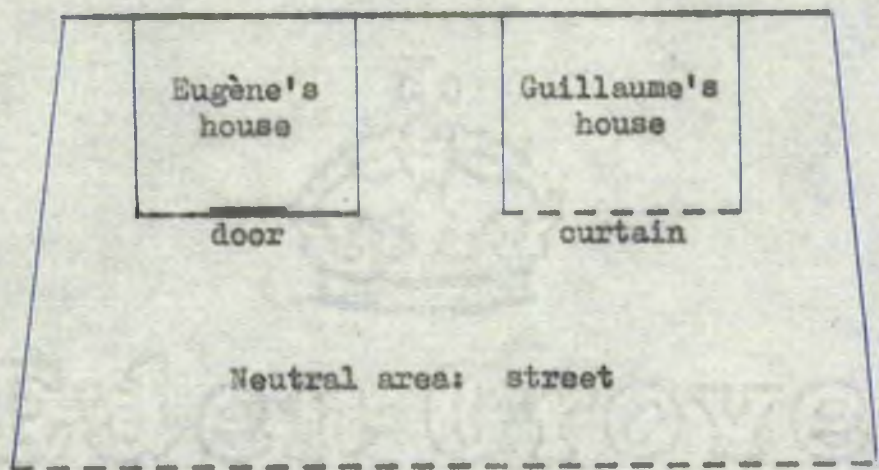
This is not the staging required for Terence's plays at any period, for there no action is ever seen happening inside a house. It could correspond to the décor of the illustrations to Renaissance editions of Terence; in those illustrations curtains are used and sometimes the drawn curtain reveals a character inside,¹ a procedure that could be followed for L'Eugène and La reconneue. But the décors of the Terentian illustrations are essentially rows or groups of numbers of compartments, whereas here there are only one or at most two.

Nor has it any Italian character;² nor is it the staging of the farces. In reading farce, one becomes used to the vertiginous changes of scenes depending doubtless on improvisation, whereas here the atmosphere is different, calmer, rather suggesting that an actual set is being used than implying improvisation.

¹ For example, in an illustration to Phormio in the 1518 Venice edition, reproduced in Lawrenson and Purkis, 'Les éditions illustrées de Térence', fig. 13.

² The farce-like character of L'Eugène is quite at variance with Serlio's elaborate comic scene, which Balmas nevertheless reproduces in his edition of Jodelle's play.

It does seem that a kind of set is implied, especially in L'Eugène and La reconnue, and also in Les corrivaux and La rencontre, which is different from anything known to us from pictorial evidence. A reasonable solution could be that the model for these writers in conceiving the setting for their plays was the Terentian illustrations, but that since their plays were less complex structurally than Terence's, so were their sets. A very simple design for L'Eugène might be:



7. The evidence of the plays: 1571-1630.

De Vivre's La fidélité nuptiale, as we saw, is the first comedy in French to imitate the Italian players newly established in France in the 1570's. Already its staging is different from that of the earlier generation. It is not elaborate; but it makes full use of the décor implied. There

is a window above — from which a servant, Pardalisca, throws down water as it were into the street, shouting as she does so "Garde l'eau. Garde l'eau". There are pillars supporting the "fenestragas" or balcony — and a masked figure who stands hidden as though he were one of the pillars:

Cependant qu'il chantera, sortira un autre accoustré legierement ayant un masque devant la face, lequel se mettra devant la porte tout debout en un coin, là ou l'autre ira chanter, et se tiendra la coy, comme si c'estoit une colonne à soutenir les fenestragas.

This active use of stage elements seems different from the more passive use seen in the comedies of the earlier generation.

There is something of it in Larivey's Les esprits,

Two compartments are needed: Severin's house and Hilaire's house. They are near each other in terms of the play (III, iii). Severin's needs a door and a window above, and both of these are actively used, the first in III, iii where the door can be heard opening, and the second in II, iii, where tiles are thrown down from it. Hilaire's needs only a door, through which Frontin enters and emerges (I, v); it also has a 'Huys de derrière' (III, ii) but this is not necessarily on stage. The stage must represent, or at least give the illusion of, two or more streets (I, ii "Je le veux appeler devant qu'il change de rue"). Near Severin's house there is a 'trou' in which he hides his purse (II, iii, etc.). Gerard's relation's house, and Ruffin's house,

are referred to and said to be in the same street as each other (IV, 11), but are not necessarily on stage.

Turnèbe's Les contents requires three compartments: the houses of Girard, Louise and Monsieur Bartole the lawyer.¹ The first needs a door, and in IV, v a window above is implied ("Qui est là-bas?"). The second needs a door which can be locked with a key (it is so locked at V, 111) and a window above which opens and closes (V, 111). None of the action other than reported action needs to go on inside Louise's house,² but we know some things about its interior: it has a 'petit oratoire' (III, vii), a 'salle' below (III, vii, etc.), and a room or rooms above (I, 1 "Qu'on se despêche de descendre"). The 'salle' has windows opening into the cour (act IV). The house also has a 'huys de derriere' (V, 11). Monsieur Bartole's house needs only a door (IV. iv-v). — These three compartments are supposed to be near each other in terms of the play itself (in III, 111 Basile, who is

¹ Dr. Spector, in his edition of the play, p. xxxvi, only counts two, omitting Monsieur Bartole's house. Although it is true that in production this house could be set off stage, there seems no reason to suppose that it is not a third compartment on stage: cf. IV, iv "Mon frere, allons trouver ce fameux avocat Monsieur Bartole, qui demeure tout icy-contre", and IV, v "Tenez, la voyla qui sort de chez Monsieur Bartole."

² Part of I, 1 could well be set inside, but M. Lebègue is wrong in assuming this to be essential ('Unité et pluralité de lieu dans le théâtre français 1450-1600', Le lieu théâtral à la Renaissance, Paris, 1964, p. 352).

outside Girard's house speaks of the door of Louise's house as "cette prochaine porte", while from IV, v we gather that M. Bartole's house is near Girard's). Girard's house appears to be a mere flat, because in IV, v Girard and Eustache speak in the street, rather than in the house, for no dramatic reason at all; the only reason that suggests itself is that the set does not allow them to enter.¹ — As well as the main neutral space, there are at least two 'ruelles' (I, 1). In I, iii Rodomont hides under an 'auvent', but V, iv referring to this same scene says that he hid behind a 'charrète', a cart; this is an inconsistency, but one or other, or both, is necessary.

Les Neapolitaines similarly needs three compartments:

Angélique's house, the Collège des Lombards, and the inn the Esou de France. The first is supposed to be in the Faubourg Saint-Germain (I, 1); it has a door, through which exit Camille, running (III, vi); it has a window (II, iii); and it probably has a 'haute gallerie', otherwise Gaster's lie (III, iii) would have no point. It has an upper storey where Angélique and Virginie live (III, viii). No action takes place within it; indeed, in III, viii it seems odd that the action should continue outside the house. The Collège des Lombards

¹ Dr. Spector suggests in his edition, p. xxxvii, that the reason is to preserve the unity of place. This theoretical reason may well be correct; the conclusion regarding the staging is nevertheless also valid.

has a window: in V, iv the innkeeper calls Camille: "Je le va
appeler par la fenestre", and Camille appears there. The Escu de
France has a door through which the innkeeper enters and emerges
(V, iii). — The street is used (V, x, etc.) as neutral territory.
— Other compartments are possible, but not essential; one likely
one is Augustin's house, for in I, i he is calling out to Loys, who,
precisely, is staying at home, and another possible one is the
house where Dieghos is staying (II, iii; III, vi; I, iii). Other
places are named, which the characters visit within the time of
the play's action, but they are not on-stage: the pâtisserie
(II, ii), Isabeau's house (IV, iv), etc.

The evidence of Fornaris' Angelica and Bruno's Il Candelaio,
both published in France, merely supports our data so far: neither
presupposes a stage in any way different from that of Les contents
or Les Neapolitaines. "L.C."s Angelique is a close translation of
Angelica. As we saw, it is doubtful whether Lasphrise's Nouvelle
tragicomique was ever acted, but if it were acted, it would be an
exception to the practice so far; it would need five compartments:
Dominique's house outside Paris, with a gate that opens; the
magician's cave; a city gate of Paris, again which opens; an inn
with a window, a door that opens, and a scene inside the inn; and
a prison.

Perrin's Les escoliers is far simpler than any of the

plays we have been discussing. As we have seen, it stands outside the Italianate tradition, and the stage of the commedia erudita is foreign to it. In this, as in other ways, the play is a return to other, simpler, forms. There is only one compartment, Marin's house; this has a door which can be heard opening (II, ii). If Friquet in I, v is not speaking in general terms, it seems that from the outside of the house one can see a staircase, a door and a window. Some of the action is definitely in the street (IV, v).

Les desguisez, although an adaptation from the Italian, is also simple. Only one compartment is essential: Gregoire's house in a residential part of Toulouse¹ (V, i; III, v "Mon père doit retourner ... bientôt de la ville"). It has a door through which Louise enters and emerges (II, ii; IV, iii). III, v-vi could take place within the house, but need not. Other possible compartments are the voisine's house (II, ii), Prouventard's house (III, iv) and Passetrouvant's house (IV, viii); any of these could be on-stage, but need not. Some action definitely takes place in the street (III, i and iv), and the stage seems to have two streets or at least their appearance (III, iv "il a jà gagné l'autre rue").

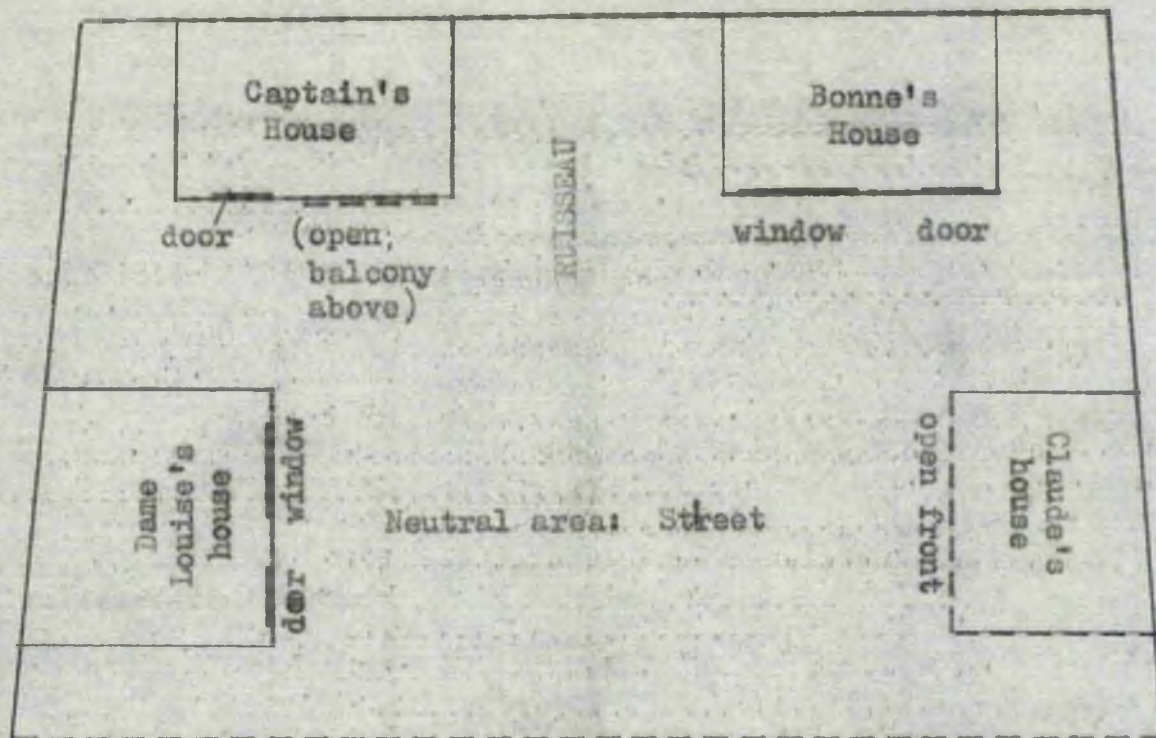
Troterel's two plays, like Les escoliers, look back to farce in many ways, and not least in their staging. The awareness of stage

¹ Not "Valence", as A. Cioranescu states (L'Arioste en France, vol. 1, Paris, 1939, p. 302).

décor which we saw in La fidélité nuptiale and Les esprits is absent here, and we have only occasional references to basic stage elements such as a door (Les corrivaux, II, iv). One of the rare references to a curtain in French Renaissance comedy is in Les corrivaux, III, iii.

The set for Les ramoneurs, on the other hand, is relatively complex. It consists of four compartments, every one of them this time with doors. The play opens outside the Captain's house, "ce malotru de logis" (ed. Gill, p. 24), "ce misérable Toiet à pourceaux" (p. 4); it has a door out of which Galaffre chases the Crocheteur (p. 6; cf. Les Neapolitaines, III, vi), and a window above (pp. 13, 32). Part at least of III, iv takes place within the house, when the chimney is swept; this is a room separate from Diane's room, the one which has the window (p. 91). — Separated from the Captain's house by a drain or 'ruisseau' (p. 21) is Dame Bonne's fruit shop, which has a window 'opposite' (p. 43) and commanding a view of the Captain's house. People go in and out of her door (pp. 70, 72). — Claude's house has a bedroom inside (pp. 120-134) in which, as in the Captain's house, action takes place; the door of the bedroom is even broken in (p. 127). Besides this, there are references to a 'Chambre de nantissement' above (p. 137), a 'salle' (p. 150) which is possibly the same as the 'chambre' (p. 97) but which is specifically not used (p. 150), and a 'porte de derrière' (p. 127). Finally, there

is the house of Dame Louise, the Lingère, which has a window (p. 153) and a room above (p. 145). This is certainly the most complicated set of any of our plays; unless a very great deal of improvisation were employed, the bare stage of the Hôtel de Bourgogne as we see it in Bosse's print (reproduced, for example, in Gill's edition, ^{frontispiece}) would be wholly insufficient. If the play was acted at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, as it would appear (p. 134 ; and Introduction, pp. xxxv ff.), then we surely must assume a more elaborate set, similar to those in the Mahelot drawings. As for the arrangement of the compartments, we know that the Captain's and Borne's houses are very near each other, that Philippe's turns left out of the Captain's house to go to Claude's (p. 87), so that Claude's must be on stage left of the Captain's; and that the Lingère's house is probably not meant to be very far from Claude's, as Galaffre easily follows Martin from one to the other. Finally, the number of references to streets, particularly small ones (pp. 71, 73, 87, 92, 119, 143) suggests gaps between the compartments, perhaps alleys as in the Vicenza set. One arrangement of the whole might be:



Corneille's Mélite, written in the same decade as Les ramoneurs, stands firmly in the tradition of multiple décor. In the examen which he published in 1660, he wrote:

Ce sens commun, qui essoit toute ma Regle ...
m'avoit donné assez d'aversion de cet horrible
dérèglement qui mettoit Paris, Rome, et Con-
stantinople sur le mesme Theatre, pour reduire
le mien dans une seule Ville.¹

The three necessary compartments — the houses of Mélite, of Cliton, and of Tirsis and Cloris — are indeed supposed to be in the same town, but nevertheless in different quarters and far

¹ Quoted from Pierre Corneille, Mélite, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre, Lille and Geneva, 1950, p. 135.

enough away for Tirsis never to have seen Mélite before (Examen: "ces quartiers doivent estre si esloignez l'un de l'autre, que les Acteurs ayent lieu de ne pas s'entreconnoistre"¹). We saw that Turnèbe in his play has minimised the artificiality of the convention; but Corneille, forty years later, here still accepts it. Later, in the Examen, he was to consider it a fault that characters were allowed only a short time to move from one quarter to another; but of course, in terms of the convention, there is no objection to this.² — Mélite's house, like so many others, has a window at first floor level at which she appears (II, viii "Elle paroist au travers d'une jalousie ... Melite se retire de la jalousie et descend"); Cloris' has a door (III, vii "Elle luy ferme la porte au nez").

What are the constant features of this convention?

First, it is quite clear that a form of décor simultané is involved, a single set with a number of houses.³ And the stages in the

¹ Ibid., p. 138.

² Thus Tirsis in act I between scenes iii and v, 82 lines; Tirsis in act II between scenes v and viii, 84 lines; Cloris in act V between scenes iii and v, 54 lines.

³ Is it necessary to refute the idea of successive changes of scene? In the 19th century, Thomas Love Peacock, translating Gl'Ingannati, wrote: "I have ... marked three changes of scene: A street, with two hotels and the house of Gherardo. A street, with the house of Flaminio. A street, with the house of Virginio", ...

illustrated editions of Terence will no longer do, because they do not have windows, doors which can be heard opening, and so on; while the elaborate set of Serlio's comic scene, with its church and tower, shop and five or more houses, is never necessary.

It is clear that a change has taken place with the coming of the Italian troupes. From Jodelle to La Taille, the maximum number of compartments needed was two, with action taking place in one of them (L'Eugène, La reconnue). From Larivey to Les ramoneurs, two to four or even five compartments are needed, with action inside them in Les ramoneurs, and the compartments need to be more complex. But the staging seems to have altered only in degree and not in essence. The example of La Taille should warn us against assuming that a sharp break occurred overnight. La Taille's models were Italian (though admittedly he wrote before the Italian troupes came), but still, as an admirer of the Pléiade he demands no more complex sets than they do. The Italians may have scored a great success in France in the 1570's, but the stage demands of French comedy do not seem to have altered essentially as a result: with Perrin and even Godard, adaptor from the Italian as he was, it was still possible to return to a

... an error which has found its way, without comment, into a modern reprint: The genius of the Italian theater, New York, 1964, p. 100.

set demanding only a single compartment. This continuity supports the particular ideas about continuity of stage design which I suggested in part 4 of this chapter.

Separate compartments, then, with a neutral street area are used throughout our period. The town is always Paris (except ^{Orleans for Le brave,} _L Toulouse for Les desguisez, and Saumur for L'avare cornu), although references to the provinces are more frequent than they will be, for example, in post-Richelieu plays. Some of the action takes place in the street, and sometimes it is specifically made clear that the characters are in neutral territory and not outside a specific character's house (Les Neapolitaines, III, xi, etc.) In Les esprits, Les contens, Les desguisez and Les ramoneurs it appears that there is more than one street, or at least the illusion of more than one street, on-stage. To this extent, the convention corresponds to Serlio's "comico scene", where small alleys open off the main central space.

The number of essential compartments, even in the later period, varies from one to four. In Perrin's Les escoliers, Marin's house is the only one, and there is no reference whatsoever to any other compartment. At the other extreme, Les ramoneurs needs four compartments; and Les Neapolitaines needs at least three, probably four or even five, while in addition four other places visited by

the characters off-stage in the course of the play are precisely named.

The compartments in the comedies, then, are always town houses with a street or streets in front of them. It is perhaps noteworthy that no comedy has any compartment representing anything other than a town house. The *Mémoire de Mahelot*, from a later period in the history of the theatre, has compartments of many other kinds (caves, castles, cemeteries, prisons, gardens, oceans, etc.), not merely in tragedies, tragicoomedies and pastorals, but also in comedies such as Du Ryer's Les vendanges de Suresnes.¹

The town houses regularly have certain features in common. Every one has a door opening directly on to the street, in view of the audience; in every case without exception a character or characters go through these doors, and in Les esprits and Les escoliers one can be heard opening. In Les contents Louise locks one with a key. Sometimes the door is all that the compartment requires; sometimes considerably more. Thus, in Les contents Louise's house has an upper storey with a visible window that opens and closes; and several others also have upper storeys and windows. Angélique's house in Les Neapolitaines appears to have a 'haute gallerie', but there is never a balcony of the Romeo and Juliet kind.

¹ Le Mémoire de Mahelot, ed. cit., p. 94.

Any serenading (Les esbahis, La fidélité nuptiale, Les ramoneurs) is done to an open window.

It is clear, however, that some compartments, although they may have a door, could perfectly well be mere 'flats' or curtains, without an interior which can be acted in. Such are Girard's house in Les contens (IV, iv) and Angélique's house in Les Neapolitaines where as I have said it causes some dramatic awkwardness in both cases that characters are forced to remain outside a house. In other plays, there is no such awkwardness, but nevertheless there is often no evidence whether a particular scene is taking place inside a house or in the street outside. Many compartments thus have no need to be anything other than 'flats' or curtains.

Others certainly have interiors within which action takes place. Such are Guillaume's house, L'Eugène, I, iii; presumably the house in Jodelle's lost play La rencontre; Monsieur's house, La reconnue, I, ii; Claude's and the Captain's houses in Les ramoneurs; and perhaps Gregoire's house, Les desquisez, III, v and vi (the action inside Louise's house in Les contens, though considerable, is merely reported). All six houses have a door, communicating with the street, through which characters pass in the course of the play, action taking place both in house and street. It is necessary, therefore, that both the inside of the house and the street should be

in view of the audience. There are two solutions. First, for the earlier plays I suggested the use of a curtain, as in the Terentian illustrations; this could be used for the later ones too, for such a curtain was certainly used a few years later in the Mahelot drawings.¹ Or it might be done by deliberately omitting the wall of a house that is on the audience's side, so that the interior is visible to the audience; Serlio illustrates this in his tragic scene, but not in the comic scene.² In Les ramoneurs (IV, x) (and in Lasphrise's Nouvelle tragicomique) an interior door is broken down, suggesting something of the kind.

Some of the Mahelot sets are close to the sets required for these plays. For one thing, they are pictures of sets built on the Hôtel de Bourgogne stage, where Les ramoneurs for one was performed, the set for Les ramoneurs not being essentially different from that required for the earlier plays. In general they are more complex; but where it happens that a play makes similar demands to those of our comedies, the set is similar. The closest is probably Rotrou's Les Menechmes, with four town houses, each having a door and a window above, and with a neutral street area and alleys between the

¹ Cf. Le Mémoire de Mahelot, ed. cit., pp. 73-4 (Hardy's La Folie de Clidamant and La folie d'Isabelle), and Les ramoneurs, ed. Gill, p. xxix.

² Reproduced, for example, in Lawrenson, The French stage, fig. 9.

houses.¹

It is, of course, an artificial convention that places which might be supposed to be some distance apart are set close to each other on stage. Potiron in La reconquête, arriving at Monsieur's house, from off-stage, is 'hors d'haleine' (IV, vi). But at least in the comedies the various houses are all supposed to be within the same town, thus fulfilling any theoretical requirement for the unity of place; whereas in the tragedies and tragi-comedies of the turn of the century (such as Chrétien de Croix' Les Portugais infortunés) distances of many miles can be involved. In one play, Les contens, the three compartments are supposed to be very near each other in terms of the play itself (III, iii and IV, v), a touch of realism peculiar to this play and strictly unnecessary in terms of the convention of décor simultané.²

A problem presents itself in the cases of L'Eugène and Les Neapolitaines which may be solved according to the degree of artificiality which is assumed. In L'Eugène, it is reported that in the interval between II, ii and III, i Arnault goes to Guillaume's

¹ Le Mémoire de Mahelot, ed. cit., p. 89 and drawing. Q. fig. 14.

² The two compartments of Les corrivaux are similarly supposed to be near each other; but the fact has to be deduced and is less obvious than in Les contens.

house, enters, confronts the company present, and departs. In Les Neapolitaines it is similarly reported that between III, xiii and IV, i Camille enters Angélique's house and sends Cornélie off to do the shopping, Cornélie returns, is delayed by some students, Camille leaves, Cornélie enters and then emerges. We learn these things by report; but in both cases the house concerned is a compartment on stage and in full view of the audience. Are we to assume that the audience 'forgets' that it has not seen the action? Or that in both cases there is a break in the performance, an interval, perhaps even with a curtain drawn? The elaborate dumb-shows that would otherwise be necessary can hardly be considered.

All this suggests a remarkably stable scenic convention, in which the same features recur continually. Three considerations lead me to think that they represent an actual stage convention throughout the period and not at any time a literary and hypothetical one. One is their very stability: the details of décor (and, as we shall see, of time-sequence) hardly change through seventy-five years, whereas freedom from the limitations of the stage might have suggested variants which we do not in fact find. Second, the details have had to be gleaned from texts where they are scattered, haphazardly and often ambiguously; if they were not practical, they might surely be expected to be more systematic. They occur incidentally in the

plays, usually having a dramatic function as well as giving mere scenic information: thus in Les Neapolitaines, V, iv, Marc-Aurel admiring all the colleges is not merely indicating 'scenery' to a reader, he is expressing the astonishment and naivety supposed to be proper to a stranger visiting Paris for the first time. Often it is not clear whether a scene is supposed to be at one house or another, inside or outside, and the very lack of system, when one considers it together with the consistency of the details that can be gleaned, seems to be a good indication that the convention we are dealing with is a practical and not merely a literal one. — And finally and more convincingly, actual production seems to be suggested by the two passages where characters, at the cost of some dramatic awkwardness, choose to remain outside a compartment rather than enter it. The only reason that presents itself is scenic necessity, in that the compartments in questions are mere flats or curtains, and that action cannot take place within them. Had the plays not been written with production in mind, the characters could quite simply have 'entered' their compartments and continued their conversation.

The question of improvisation was mentioned in connection with the farces. Improvisation by a good actor would, of course, at once remove the necessity for many of the pieces of stage set which

we have been discussing, and for properties as well. The Jean-Louis Barrault of Les enfants du paradis did not need an actual pocket watch to convey to us the idea of one, and the Italian actors so closely connected with the French comedy of this time had a reputation for improvisation as great as any in theatre history. A 'realist' school of acting at this time is most unlikely, and it would be naïve to take literally each single reference to staging in these plays. But there is no evidence; and if a play refers to a serenade sung to a window above, it is at least difficult to do without the window. And above all, the continuity of the references to windows and the like, and to the nature of the total set, does suggest that throughout our period actual stage sets were used.

7. Action on-stage; styles of acting; costumes; properties; masks; stage-directions.

The point about improvisation leads on to the whole question of acting and action on-stage.¹ Most violent action, we find, is set off-stage, a standard theoretical principle of course for tragedies up to the end of the 16th century, and followed in the comedies too. The riot in Les corrivaux, the escape through the

¹ More details about acting will be found in part III, where asides and soliloquies, and the speech proper to certain characters, are discussed.

window in Les contens, and all the seductions, happen off-stage, just like all the deaths and murders in the tragedies. If we compare Renaissance farce, we see how little physical action is used in this comic tradition, where the most violent actions that can be cited are Camille's hasty exit from a house in Les Neapolitains (III, vi), the tile-throwing in Les esprits (II,iii), and Rodomont's arrest in Les contens (III, ii) — and also, exceptionally, the breaking down of a door in Les ramoneurs (p. 127), which may be accounted for by the play's late date or by its known connection with the farce-actors. One action of setting certain action off-stage is that the women's parts can be made very small.

Other stage business can be deduced from the text. We have already seen how characters continually go in and out of doors. Other action involves the use of properties: for example Panthaleone singing to his lute in Les esbahis, or the use of disguise. Character after character overhears without being seen: such as Potiron in La reconnue (III, iv), Désiré in Les esprits (II, iii), or Gregoire and Maudolé in Les desguisez (IV, v) who specifically move aside for the purpose. In Les contens, characters hide their faces with their cloaks (III, v; IV, i and iv). The particularly lively actions in de Vivre's La fidelité nuptiale were rightly described by La Vallière in 1768 as lazzi:

Ascanio, valet de Charès, est aussi sorti avec un luth, et va chanter dans les rues. Tout cet acte se passe en lazzi [sic] entre ce valet et une figure masquée qui lui fait plusieurs niches.¹

To judge from this knockabout scene, from the bright costumes, from the masks, and from the Italian names in the play, it does look very much as though de Vivre has been influenced by the commedia dell'arte, already in the 1570's, rather more than has either d'Amboise or Turnèbe.

There are three serenades. Panthaleone in Les esbahis (II, iii and V, i) sings lines from Orlando furioso to the lute. Charès in La fidélité nuptiale, "jeune gentilhomme, avecques la cappe et l'espée", sings parts of no less than five of the most popular chansons of the day: Toutes les nuicts, Susanne un jour, Bon jour mon coeur, Douce memoire, and Mon coeur se recommande à vous; his "garçon" Ascanio ("car vous savez Messieurs Tel Maistre, tel valet") sings parts of D'Amours me va tout au rebours, En entrant en un jardinet, Changeons propos and Qui veut entrer en grace. In Les ramoneurs, Philippes even hires a consort of voices, lutes and guitars to serenade Diane:

(Diane:) Mon Dieu, quelle ravissante melodie, quel

¹ La Vallière, Bibliothèque du théâtre françois depuis son origine, vol. I, Dresden, 1768, pp. 215-7.

agréable mélange de voix, de luts et de
guitarres; Escoute un air où ton nom est
inséré ...¹

References to facial and bodily expression occur, but are not common. We may gather from the text that the delivery is pompous (Maudolé in Les desguisez, III, iv "Je pompe, je morgue, je brave"), or lyrical, or violent, but there is not much other evidence about the kind of delivery intended or expected by the author. In L'Eugène, II, ii, Florimond says to Arnault "Tu t'en venois tzepignant / Pour me trouver" and "Je te voyois mouvoir le doy, / Et marmonner en tes deux levres", and in Les desguisez, II, iv, Gregoire says of Trouven-tard "Il s'en va furieusement". Details of stage delivery, as in the succeeding century, do not appear to have been part of the author's province; we may perhaps compare Renaissance music, where the notes before the performers could certainly be played in many different ways and on many different instruments, to be decided by the performers, not specified by the composer.²

Costumes are often varied and colourful in the comedies: Josse's fur coat in Les esbahis; the sweeps' clothes in Les ramoneurs;

¹ Les ramoneurs, ed. Gill, p. 34. Cf. fig. 15.

² A study of acting in Renaissance France, by Donald Roy, is at present in preparation. A discussion of acting in England at this time may be found in B.L. Joseph, Elizabethan acting, Oxford, 1951.

Dom Dieghos' cloak in Les Neapolitaines. Disguise is commonly part of the plays' comic structure: in Les ramoneurs sweeps' clothes with a little soot are used to disguise a woman as a man, in Les contens Alix is disguised also as a man, and in Les desguisez the device is of course fundamental to the play. Costume is more important still in Les contens, where Turnèbe has made of a scarlet cloak something more than a stock disguise. It and a second cloak exactly like it are integrated into the plot, and are essential to no less than six different scenes of the play, worn by four different characters. The scarlet colour, as Dr. Spector points out, is an ironic comment on the supposed virtue of Genevieve, to which the cloaks are always related.¹ Gerard de Vivre, too, though he says in the preface Aux lecteurs to his collection of plays that comedies deal with "matiere vulgaire" and therefore do not require elaborate costumes, nevertheless uses several costumes to some meaning in La fidelité nuptiale, such as a black dress signifying melancholy and mourning, or the white sleeves of Palestra signifying wifely virtue.

References to other 'scenery' or to 'properties' other than clothing are not frequent. In Les esbahis, La fidelité nuptiale and Les ramoneurs we have the lutes and guitars needed for the serenades.

¹ Les contens, ed. Spector, introduction, pp. xlvi-vii, lxvi-ix.

In La reconnue there is kitchen equipment, in Les esprits tiles and a purse and a 'trou' to hide the purse in, in Les contents and 'auvent' and/or a cart, in Les desguisez a purse. A piece of 'scenery' or more compartments or 'flats' is implied in Les Neapolitaines, V, iv: "Toutes ces grandes maisons, sont-oe collégés?". Les ramoneurs is unique in needing quite a collection of small 'props'. A good use of them is found in Les corrivaux, III, iii, where the two servants Alizon and Claude find themselves in the street embarrassed by the distaff and torch which they are respectively carrying and which each intend to wave as a secret signal to the lover who has bribed him for the purpose.

The Italian actors, as we see them in the pictures of Italian comedy in France, wore masks for some characters but not for others: that is, for any given play we are to assume the rather odd theatrical technique whereby some actors wear them while others do not. The French farce-actors certainly used them, the technique surviving into the character Mascarille in Molière's Les précieuses ridicules,¹ while masks were among the equipment of Valleran le Conte in 1598.² In our plays, though actors may well have used them, only

¹ The Testament de feu Gaultier-Garguille refers to "Mon habit noir, mon masque, ma chevelure blanche"; cf. D. Roy, Conditions and conventions of the early 17th century theatre in France (unpublished dissertation for the degree of M.A., University of Wales, 1954), p. 304.

² D. Roy, *ibid.*

one play specifies a mask, and that only for one character: de Vivre's La fidelité nuptiale. A stage direction, at the point where Ascanio is singing his first song (D'Amours me va tout au rebours), reads: "Cependant qu'il [Ascanio] chantera, sortira un autre accoustré legierement ayant un masque devant la face." In addition, in the last scene of Les Neapolitaines, Gaster the parasite turns to the audience for the final speech of the play which includes the words: "Mon nez, tel que vous le voyez, sçait bien à quoy s'en tenir: qui bien fera bien trouvera", which may possibly refer to a mask.

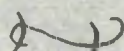
As for stage directions, they are found in quantity only in one source, once again the plays of Gerard de Vivre, which seem to have much to tell us about the Renaissance stage. Every edition of de Vivre's plays includes a list of signs which are liberally used in the plays themselves:

La signification des signes, desquels j'useray en toutes mes Comedies.

(x) Ce signe, signifie une pause.

(x^x) Cestuy deux.

(x^{xx}) Cestuy trois, chascune pause vaut une reprise d'haleine.

 Un pourmenement par tout le Theatre.

() Cecy signifie parler bas.

" Cecy signifie, de parler plus vite que le reste.

— Cecy de parler plus lentement que le reste.

In addition to these signs, de Vivre's plays also contain stage directions given in full, such as the one quoted above for its mention of a mask. Occasional stage directions are found in the other plays, but they are rare and isolated, like this from Les esprits: "Il crache, et ceux de dedans jettent des tuiles" (II, iii). The words "Tich tach toch" are curiously put into the mouth of characters in Larivey's, Turnèbe's and d'Amboise's plays to indicate that they are knocking at a door. They may therefore be classed as a stage direction.¹

But details of acting technique and of stage conditions at this time are unlikely to be peculiar to the genre of comedy; so that these details, gleaned from the text of French Renaissance comedies, can be seen to be relevant to the French Renaissance as a whole, about which we have such scanty evidence today.

¹ Orazio Vecchi's L'Amfiparnaso, Venice, 1597, which if not quite the first opera is a play sung in madrigal form, most extraordinarily sets the words "Tich tach toch" to music, as though they were indeed spoken by the character concerned and not merely representing the sound of his knocking.

III THE CONVENTIONS

1. Comic theory in the French Renaissance.

Dramatic criticism in Renaissance France is at first sight small in quantity. There is no parallel to Corneille's Discours, for example, nor to the ample prologues and epistles which Ben Jonson added to his plays. We have today three sources for French Renaissance dramatic theories: the treatises on poetry in general, the liminary material to actual comedies, and (for comedy) the commentaries on Terence. The first of these gives drama a small place indeed; the second is fragmentary; and the third primarily pedagogic, even pedantic. At first sight, this is perhaps surprising, to us for whom the dramatic production of the Renaissance is one of its principal legacies. But in France, for various social, political and economic reasons, drama never achieved the flowering that it did for example in England: in the last decade of the 16th century, when aristocratic patronage and popular support combined in England to encourage a rapidly increasing dramatic activity, France was in the grip of a far sadder political situation, and the English fusion of classical influences, of the experience of the Italian actors, and the native drama, was never achieved there.

But all the same, the dearth of theoretical material is partly an illusion. The extracts from treatises, and the liminary material to plays, may seem fragmentary indeed, but the appearance is deceptive, for two reasons. Firstly, drama in general was not, in the 16th century, considered as anything other than as a species of poetry, along with the ode, the hymn, the epic and other forms. Scaliger, praising the comic form, praises it specifically in its context as such a species: comedy is the first and true form of poetry in general, because of the special role of invention in it:

Tantum enim abest, ut Comoedia Poema non sit: ut
pene omnium et primum, et verum existimem. In eo
enim fiata omnia, et materia quassita tota.¹

Specifically dramatic criticism as such was less possible then that it is today, when theories of the drama — as of the novel or of lyric poetry — are often readily discussed in isolation. It follows that many ideas which are certainly relevant to Renaissance views on drama are to be found expressed as relevant to poetry in general. It is essential to keep this broader view in mind. Where the author of a treatise writes a section on tragedy or comedy (or on the epic, the hymn or the ode), he will put in it only such ideas as are supplementary to ideas which he has expressed as relevant to poetry in general: ideas on imitation, invention, decorum and the

¹ Postices libri septem, Heidelberg, 1607 edn., I, 2.

like. We must therefore take full notice of those more widely applicable ideas. — And secondly, one form of comic theory was inescapably part of every cultivated man's education during the Renaissance: Terence's plays and the commentaries on them, both those ascribed to Donatus and those by more recent critics.

Marvin T. Herriok has discussed the influence of the commentaries in a European context;¹ while H.W. Lawton has shown particularly how great was the number of editions of Terence published in France at this time.²

All the sources of comic theory in France are normally descriptive, usually of Terentian or of contemporary French practice. They are less often prescriptive, even though they may ostensibly appear so, or historical in any diachronistic sense. When Vauquelin de la Fresnaye in 1605 prescribes rules for the observance of decorum of speech in comedy:

Grand' difference y a faire un maistre parler,
Ou Davus qui ne doit au maistre s'égaller,
Ou le bon Pantelon, ou Zany dont Ganasse

¹ Marvin T. Herriok, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 34, nos. 1-2), Urbana, 1950; published separately, Urbana, 1964.

² H.W. Lawton, Térence en France au XVI^e siècle, Paris, 1926.

Nous a représenté la façon et la grace¹

he is certainly referring to the Andria of Terence and to plays performed in France by the Italian troupe of Ganassa.² His prescriptive or didactic form is, as so often with Renaissance instruction books, in fact a cloak for description, in this case of Terence and the commedia dell'arte. When a genuinely prescriptive approach is in fact adopted, it is usually in general terms, not in terms of detailed dramatic practice; thus Du Bellay:

Quand aux comedies et tragedies, si les roys et les republicques les vouloint restituer en leur ancienne dignité, qu'ont usurpée les farces et moralitez, je seroy' bien d'opinion que tu t'y employasses, et si tu le veux faire pour l'ornement de ta Langue, tu scais ou tu en dois trouver les archetypes.³

The dramatic theory that is to be found in Renaissance treatises on poetry -- those of Sebillet, Du Bellay, Peletier du Mans, Scaliger, Pierre de Laudun, d'Aigalliers, Vauquelin de la Fresnaye --

¹ Jean Vauquelin de la Fresnaye, L'Art Poétique, I, 1605; quoted from H.W. Lawton, Handbook of French Renaissance dramatic theory, Manchester, 1949, p. 104.

² On Ganassa, cf. A. Baschet, Les comédiens italiens à la cour de France, Paris, 1882, chapter 1.

³ La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse Paris, 1549, II, iv; ed. H. Chamard, Paris, 1961, pp. 125-6.

and most of the relevant liminary material, have been valuably gathered together by H.W. Lawton in his Handbook of French Renaissance dramatic theory (Manchester, 1949), which will be frequently referred to in the pages that follow. The material is necessarily isolated; in the case of the theory, from the rest of the treatise, and in the case of the liminary material, from the plays that accompany it.

W.F. Patterson's Three centuries of French poetic theory (Ann Arbor, 1935) amplifies the context in the first case, while the examination of the plays themselves in the present work should give the context of the second. A brief survey of the sources that survive, their statements on comedy, and the context of those statements, is as follows.

We may begin with the period just before the Pléiade. Earlier than that, comic theory was certainly discussed, but primarily in connection with the plays of Terence and the commentaries on them, and the ideas were broadly identical with those of Donatus and his successors. And as far as comic practice is concerned, our material begins at the mid-century; the literal translations of the earlier period, and the other genres such as the plays of Marguerite de Navarre, do not concern us here. With these theoretical ideas in mind, it should be possible in the succeeding chapters to approach the dramatic practice of the time and in particular the use that is made of dramatic conventions directed towards audiences with certain

known tastes and literary training.

The first full-length treatise relevant to comedy is Thomas Sebillet's Art Poétique François (Lyon, 1548). Its author's interest in drama is shown by his translation into French of Euripides' Iphigenia. It precedes Jodelle's L'Eugène by some four years, and by its date already has a particular interest, because of the somewhat embarrassed position in which the Pléiade as a group found themselves towards its author's ideas. Henri Chamard has shown how doctrines which the Pléiade would have liked to proclaim resoundingly as new and their own had already been expressed, awkwardly for them, by Sebillet.¹ As far as comedy is concerned, it turns out that the situation is complex. Sebillet's section on the theatre is primarily descriptive, accepting the medieval genres as they still actively survived in his own day. He is concerned with questions of terminology: Farces, Botties, Comedies Latines, Comedies Grecques et Latines, Moralités, Tragedies, Mimes ou Priapées, are the terms whose relationships and differences he discusses in two short paragraphs. Earlier, he has discussed moralities and farces, accepting them (despite his disapproval of the indecency of the farces) as part of the state of the theatre in his time, and indeed giving

¹ Chamard, Histoire de la Pléiade, I, 160-3 and 192-215.

certain maxims and instructions for writing them. -- His commentary on them is, then, descriptive ("nous ne faisons aujourd'uy ne pures Moralités, ne simples farces"), but also didactic: "A quoy exprimer [farces] tu ne doutes point que les vers de huit syllabes ne soient plus plaisans, et la ryme platte plus coulante." It is strange, to say the least, that he does not discuss Terentian comedy despite the several commentaries on, translations of, and discussions of Terence which had appeared before his time, nor Italian comedy despite the famous court performance of the Calandria at Lyon in 1548 and despite Estienne's translation of Gl'Ingennati into French in 1543; he is concerned with the contemporary medieval survivals only. From the more forward-looking ideas found in the rest of the Art Poétique François, one might have expected if not an awareness of Italian theatre, at least more interest in Terence.

Du Bellay, as one might expect, rejects this view. For him, the classical theatre is alone worthy of imitation. But the short paragraph in which he expresses this view (quoted above) is a strange statement indeed in a treatise supposed to prepare the way for a new national literature. Not only are the Italian comedies not mentioned in the Deffence et Illustration (which in the field of lyric poetry strongly and of course successfully advocates among other things the imitation of Italian models), but even the name of Terence,

the obvious model, does not appear.

The question of imitation of ancient comedies, of abandonment or preservation of medieval forms, which has so far been answered only with lack of perception on Sebillet's part and lack of attention on Du Bellay's, takes a more interesting turn with the theory and practice of Etienne Jodelle. It is, as one would expect, totally opposed to Sebillet's. Jodelle does not accept the status quo; for him, moralities and farces are part of the medievalism which is to be rejected in favour of antiquity. They are impatiently dismissed:

Sans que, brouillant avecques nos farceurs
Le saint ruisseau de nos plus saintes Soeurs,
On moralise un conseil, un escrit,
Un temps, un tout, une chair, un esprit,
Et tels fatras ...¹

But a discrepancy clearly exists between Jodelle's theory and his practice. In theory, farces cause an unwelcome muddying of "le saint ruisseau de nos plus saintes Soeurs"; in fact, L'Eugène owes much to farce technique and conventions.² So that whereas in the field of serious drama, Jodelle's claims to have broken with the medieval genres

¹ Etienne Jodelle, L'Eugène, ed. E.H. Balmas, Milan, 1955, prologue, ll. 37-41.

² Cf. part I above.

in favour of a classical one (Senecan tragedy) were fully justified, in the field of comedy his similar claims were not substantiated.

The next treatise is Jacques Peletier du Mans' Art Poétique, Lyon, 1555. Here again, as one would expect of a member of the Pléiade writing a theoretical work, medieval genres are dismissed:

Nous esperons que les Farces qu'on nous à si long tans
jouées se convertiront au g'anre de la Comedie: les Ieus
des Martires, en la forme de Tragedie.¹

What is perhaps more surprising is that creation of comedy in France is expressed as a pious hope and not as something which has already been begun; according to Peletier, the French comic theatre still consists of worthless medieval genres:

nous n'auons point ancors vù an notre François aucuns
Ecriz, qui usset la vree forme Comique: mes bien force
Moralitez, e teles sortes de jeuz. Auquez le nom de
Comedie n'est pas du.²

In fact, Jodelle's L'Eugène dates from some three years before this treatise; did Peletier simply not know of it? It may well be so, for he admits that he knows the Cleopatre only at second hand ("une [tragedie] par Etienne Jodelle Parisien, de laquelle j'e oul seulement le bruit").³ Or could it be that the farcical elements in the play

¹ Art Poétique, II, v; ed. A. Boulanger, Paris, 1930, p. 172.

² Ibid., II, vii, p. 139.

³ Ibid., pp. 192-3.

made it unworthy, for Peletier, of the name of comedy? In any case, with the exclusion of medieval genres and the omission of Jodelle, it is clear that what Peletier has to say about comedy will describe classical practice, and not practice in France in his own time.

Peletier's discussion of comedy is the longest that had as yet been written in France. He discusses in succession comedy as a mirror of life which shows us certain types of people; plot-structure; the merits and demerits of Terence, Plautus and others; the desirability of comedy in France; the differences between comedy and tragedy (rank of characters, ending, elements of the plot, diction). His starting point is Cicero's description of comedy as "imitationem vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis"; his analysis is from Aristotle and Donatus; and his model is Terence. It may be worth discussing these points.

The Ciceronian description was known only through Donatus' De tragoedia et comoedia. But it was widely known and continually quoted; we shall find it again, for example, in Larivey's dedication of his 1579 collection: "La Comedie, vray mirouer de noz œuvres". For these men, it is of course only a statement in particular terms of the Renaissance principle of imitatio: art is not something created anew, something "original"; but an imitation, either of nature, directly, or of nature through

other (generally classical) writers. The idea is Platonic, and may have been familiar to Donatus, as well as to his Renaissance successors. Thus comedy, like all other forms of art, is a re-creation, a mirror to life. For Peletier, the things it reflects are:

l'avarice ou la prudence des vielhars: les amours e
ardeurs des jeunes enfans de maison: les astuces e
ruses de leurs Amies: la vilenie e deshonnete des
Maquereaus: la facon des Peres tantot seueres,
tantot faciles: l'assantacion e vilete des Parasites:
la vanterie e brayete d'un Soudart retire de la
guerre: la dilig'ance des Nourrices: l'indulg'ance
des Meres¹

that is, the characteristics of middle-class people and their servants and hangers-on, selected according to Terentian models, as opposed to the kings and nobles of tragedy.

Donatus, and not "les Greos", provides the terminology for Peletier's discussion of plot-structure: prologue, protasis, epitasis, catastrophe. They are the standard terms used in that familiar commentary, and I shall discuss them further in the section on plot-structure below.

Peletier's discussion of comedy and of the differences between tragedy and comedy is in Aristotelian terms, of plot,

¹ Art Poétique, II, vii; ed. cit., pp. 186-7.

character and speech. About speech or diction, he says that "La Comédie parle facilement et ... populairement",¹ and refers to Caecilius, called by Cicero a "mauvais auteur de Latinité".² These Aristotelian divisions are readily though tacitly accepted here, as in most of the subsequent theoretical writings on comedy. Their innings is not yet over: the three next chapters in this book are based on the same division.

Peletier proclaims the excellence of Terence. Theorist after theorist will later do the same thing; and the popularity of that author has been clearly shown by Professor Lawton in his Térence en France au XVII^e siècle. It should only be remembered here, first that this popularity was not exclusively based on dramatic merit in Terence; and second that Terence is not the only model for the actual comedies (as opposed to theories of comedy) that were written in France before Corneille. As for the reasons for the popularity, Professor Herrick has suggested that the main one may have been quite simply the existence of Donatus' excellent commentary.³ Also, Aristophanes may have been better in many ways,

¹ Ibid., p. 190.

² Ibid., p. 189.

³ Herrick, Comio theory, p. 5.

but he was too immoral for schools; Plautus too may have been better, but his Latin is not as admirable as Terence's and therefore, again, not so suitable for teaching in schools. Scaliger says that he prefers Plautus as a comic writer, Terence as a stylist.¹ These pedant's reasons may not be the whole story, for Terence's plays still hold the stage today, but they are important.

Most of Peletier's ideas reappear, treated at greater length, in J.C. Scaliger's Poetices libri septem, first published at Lyon in 1561. The subjects treated are: the definition of comedy; peril in comedy; the differences between tragedy and comedy in terms of plot-elements, character and diction; plot-structure, at some length; a discussion of the merits and demerits of Terence. We have the Ciceronian statement, slightly changed ("Caeterum, vel ex authoribus, vel ipsius vitae nostrae exemplis sibi quisque quantum volet sumet"); the Donatian analysis of structure, with changes by Scaliger, while the whole basis of the analysis is Aristotelian and Terence is the model, with occasional reference to Plautus. The discussion is a very full one, and based

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"Nam equidem Plautum ut Comicum, Terentium ut loquutorem admirabor" (Poetices libri septem, Heidelberg, 1607 edn., VI, ii, p. 707.

on firm knowledge of his models. His most individual contribution is the addition of a fourth division, catastasis, to Donatus' three which are protasis, epitasis and catastrophe: this I shall re-examine in the next chapter.

After Scaliger, the same ideas reappear. Jacques Grévin quotes his Cicero on comedy: "Cicéron l'appelle imitation de vie, mirouer des coustumes, et image de vérité" before entering into a history of the genre from earliest times.¹ It is quite clear that there was a solid body of critical statements which was well known to all and could be assumed as basic knowledge in any audience. In a sense, then, this body of knowledge forms a convention, a framework upon which variations can be built. In 1577 Gerard de Vivre wrote:

Amis Lecteurs, chascun sçait desja bien que c'est que la Comedie, pourtant ne m'amuseray à la vous deschiffrer en ce lieu ci, à cause, qu'il y en a tant d'autres qui en ont faict mention.²

Pierre de Landun d'Aigaliers' Art Poétique François, Paris, 1579, contains similar ideas, grouped under subject-matter,

¹ Brief discours pour l'intelligence de ce théâtre, Théâtre complet, ed. L. Pinvert, Paris, 1922, p. 7.

² Comédie des amours de Theseus et Dianira, Paris, 1577, preface Aux Lecteurs.

type of characters, plot-structure, diction. He says, interestingly, that comedy and farce are not really very different from each other by their content: only that farces are shorter and do not have acts, and may not introduce gods or goddesses or characters from moralities (comedies of course may not introduce them either — but de Laudun has now turned to the most general definition of "comédie").¹ Jean Vauquelin de la Fresnaye, in his full but diffuse Art Poétique, Paris, 1605, uses similar ideas: he adds to them some evident knowledge of the Italian actors in France, as we saw, and of both Grévin's and Belleau's work. It is interesting to find this literary theorist insisting that rules are not important compared with following the model of nature. Even a farce, if it does that, is better than a comedy:

Quelquefois une farce au vray Patelinée,
Où par art on ne voit nulle rime ordonnée ...
Pour ce qu'au vray les mœurs y sont représentées,
Les personnes rendra beaucoup plus contentées,
Et les amusera plustost cent mille fois
Que des vers sans plaisir rangez dessous les lois,
N'ayant sauce ni suc, ni rendant exprimée
La Nature en ses mœurs de chacun bien aimée,
Nature est le Patron sur qui se doit former
Ce qu'on veut pour long temps en ce monde animer.²

To these treatises must be added the scattered liminary material:

¹ Quoted from Lawton, Handbook, p. 92.

² Ibid., p. 112.

Larivey's dedication to François d'Amboise, where he defends his use of prose on the grounds that ordinary people do not speak in verse; or François d'Amboise's prologue in which he claims that his play is, by exception, not based on an invented action, but on a true story; or Godard's moralising on his combining a tragedy and a comedy into a single unit.¹ D'Amboise even applies the theory to his own play, telling us precisely which part is the protasis, which the epitasis, and which the catastrophe.²

We have not yet considered the ethical view of comedy.

Sir Philip Sidney, in his Defence of Poetry, expresses such a view:

Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of life, which he [the comic writer] represents in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be; so that it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one. Now, as in

¹ Ancien théâtre français, V, pp. 2-3; *ibid.*, VII, pp. 241-2; Lawton, Handbook, p. 90.

² Les Neapolitaines, Paris, 1584, ff. 4-13 "Sommaire de ceste histoire Comique". The "Sommaire" is not reprinted in Ancien théâtre français, VII, or in Fournier's Le théâtre français. — Throughout the period, the editions of Terence, with commentaries, continued to appear. In the year that L'Eugène was written, 1552, for instance, appeared the monster edition at Paris, containing besides Terence's plays writings and commentaries by eighteen critics. It would certainly be of value to examine in detail the commentaries that may have been known to, and used by, the French Renaissance writers of comedy. This I have not done in full detail, aiming rather at an examination of the plays themselves, with the context of Donatus' commentaries (certainly the best known of them) and of French Renaissance theorists.

Geometry, the oblique must be known as well as the right, and in Arithmetick the odd as well as the even, so in the actions of our life who seeth not the filthiness of evil wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of virtue.¹

In France, as throughout Europe in the Renaissance, this ethical point was discussed as well as the aesthetic one. De Vivre writes at some length about the moral function of his plays, which are intended to show the "variables accidents de Fortune". Larivey too develops the Ciceronian image of the mirror to show his plays' moral function:

Toutes fois, considerant que la Comedie, vrai miroüer de noz œuvres, n'est qu'une morale philosophie, donnant lumière à toute honneste discipline, et par consequent à toute vertu, ainsi que le tesmoigne Andronique, qui premier l'a faict veoir aux Latins, j'en ay voulu jetter ces premiers fondemens, ou j'ay mis, comme en bloc, divers enseignements fort profitables, blasment les vitieuses actions et louant les honnestes, affin de faire cognoistre combien le mal est à eviter, et avec quel courage et affection la vertu doit estre emmerassée, pour meriter louange, acquerir honneur en ceste vie et esperer non seulement une gloire entre les hommes, mais une celeste recompense après le trespas.²

¹ Quoted from M.C. Bradbrook, The growth and structure of Elizabethan comedy, London, 1955, p. 29.

² Epistre to François d'Amboise to his 1579 collection; Ancien théâtre français. V, pp. 1-2.

How far did this view turn out to be an excuse for immorality, and how far was it real?

Morality is not important in the Pléiade comedies.

Though those plays were born in a University milieu, they were not intended to have pedagogic value. The difference is important; at the Collège de Boncourt, comedies were written only by students: when teachers such as Muret and Buchanan wrote drama, they wrote edifying tragedies. Jodelle's aims were to make his own reputation, and to achieve an aesthetically successful example of the new classical genre in French, but not to teach anything. In fact, L'Eugène is immoral both in its action and in its outcome: Alix at the end of the play promises fidelity not to her husband but to her lover the churchman Eugène. La tresorière is about attempted adultery, once successful and once unsuccessful, and about unscrupulous financial dealings: no word of condemnation of these things is uttered. Les contens plays ironically with the gap between real immorality and the bourgeois concern for appearances: the irony is aesthetically successful, but has no reforming intent. Most of the other plays end with a marriage after a successful, and often forcible, seduction. "They say the comedies rather teach than reprehend amorous conceits", wrote Sidney — and so indeed it appears.¹

¹ Bradbrook, Elizabethan comedy, p. 30. Cf. Des Autelz' ...

Les ramoneurs in the early 1620's, with its prostitutes and procuresses, is thoroughly in the same tradition. But Mélite, some five years later, represents the end of this kind of Renaissance comedy, for in it not only does Corneille take as his subject people's affections only, but he specifically condemns infidelity.

In practice, then, Renaissance comedy seems to have aimed at delight rather than moral reform. Perhaps the Englishman Lyly had the most honest attitude when he wrote that his plays were made for pleasure, were "mere pastime or plays of the imagination". He writes, too, that they were made "to move inward delight ... to breed soft smiling, not loud laughing".¹ Laughter is not an important aim of the French playwrights either, whether in theory or practice: we laugh at the predicaments in L'Écureuil or Les corrivaux, at the puns, at the braggarts, but these are all elements

... similar statement about comedy (though not about native French comedy, which did not exist when he wrote): "Or que la Moralité ... soit plus profitable que ny la Comedie, ny la Tragedie, il en appert, pource que ces deux tendent plus à la corruption que à la bonne information des moeurs: l'une proposant tout exemple de lascivité, l'autre de cruauté et tyrannie" (Replique ... aux furieuses defenses de Louis Meigret, Lyon, 1551; quoted from Margaret L.M. Young, Guillaume Des Autels, Geneva, 1961, p. 46).

¹ Prologue to The Women in the Moon (1597), Endimion (1579), and Sapho and Phao (1582?). Quoted from J.W.H. Atkins, English Literary criticism: The Renaissance, London, 1947, p. 240.

incidental to the principal aim, which is delight.

To sum up: the comic theory follows a constant pattern throughout our period. Also, it appears in many different sources, pedagogic, theoretical and theatrical; so that a majority of any cultivated audience must have been aware of it. Variations on it must have been recognised, such as, for plot, Belleau's unusual delaying of his action to a sudden quickening in act V; for character, the variety of servants and masters; and for speech, the interplay of kinds of language proper to captains, valets, heroines, and the rest. The ~~rest~~ of this book is about those variations.

2. Plot.

Comedy as one part of a performance

The Greek ideal of an overall dramatic performance, consisting of tragedies, comedies, and satyr-plays or mimes, all on a single occasion, could hardly fail to appeal to the Pléiade, anxious as they were to revive the practice of the ancients in every way possible. They revived Greek practice, for example, in the famous ceremony of the "bouc" which they connected with the supposed etymology of "tragoedia" as "goat-song". But despite their lip-service to Athens, it was Rome that gave them their principal models (Seneca for tragedy and Terence for comedy), and in Rome, as

far as the surviving evidence shows, such overall dramatic performances were not the general practice.¹ On these grounds alone, then, it is hardly surprising that the Pléiade and their successors only rarely achieved such performances.

Jodelle and Grévin are the first to have done so. The famous productions at the Hôtel de Reims and the Collège de Boncourt consisted of Cléopâtre and L'Eugène together, and their author was regularly praised for his introduction of both genres into France.² Grévin went a step further than Jodelle in including the equivalent of a third dramatic genre of the ancients, the satyr-play:

Ceste comédie [Les esbahis] fut mise en jeu au collège de Beauvais, à Paris, le XVIIe jour de février M.D.LX. après la tragédie de J. César et les Jeux satyriques, appelez communément les Veaux.³

¹ The first known Latin dramatist, Livius Andronicus, produced a tragedy and a comedy at the Ludi Romani of 239 B.C., according to Cassiodorus (W. Beare, The Roman stage, London, 1955, p. 17). But Beare and other sources otherwise have little to say about such combinations.

² For example in the letter of Denys Lambin cited by M. Balmas, in his edition of L'Eugène, p. 10: "Delectavit me in primis epistolæ tuæ locus de comoediis et tragoediis Gallicis. Libenter enim audio linguam nostram, quam ceteræ nationes barbaram et inopem esse dicunt, antiquarum poetarum veneres et ornamenta capere, interpretari et exprimere posse."

³ Quoted from J. Grévin, Théâtre complet, ed. L. Pinvert, Paris, 1922, p. 355.

The satyr-play Les Veaux seems to have been performed also two years earlier, accompanying Grévin's other comedy La tresorière, but this time without a tragedy.

Ceste comédie [La tresorière] fut ... mise en jeu à Paris au collège de Beauvais, après la satire qu'on appelle communément les Veaux, le v. de février M.D.LVIII.¹

Les Veaux may possibly have been an imitation of an ancient genre, perhaps even of Euripides' Cyclops, the one surviving satyr-play, but in view of Grévin's own remark that the farces of his own time are descended from one of these genres, the mime, it was quite likely simply a farce ("Les anciens avoyent encores une autre sorte de Comédie qu'ils appeloient Mimus ou Bastelerie, pour autant qu'elle estoit faicte de parolles ordes et villaines, et de matières assez deshonestes ... De là sont venues les farces des François, comme nous pouvons facilement voir").² Grévin claimed, as we saw in chapter 1, that his plays were the first French plays on ancient models (perhaps because he published his plays, which Jodelle at

¹ Ibid., pp. 353-4.

² Brief discours pour l'intelligence de ce théâtre,
Théâtre complet, p. 8.

this time had not), and so for him the question of an authentic performance might have been all the more important.

Even with this early generation of enthusiasts for antiquity, however, other influences may have come to bear. A "farce", we know, was originally something used to stuff ("farcir") a performance of another kind of play, and still in the 16th century was used in this way in the mystery plays.¹ Grévin himself writes that he knows two other kinds of theatre where this sort of programme-building took place: the perambulating theatre of the Low Countries, and the stages of the University of Paris itself:

Et semble qu'encore ceste coustume [of acting in the street] soit demeurée en Flandres, et Pais bas, où les joueurs de Comédies se font trainer par les carrefours sur des chariots et là jouent leurs histoires, Comédies et farces.²

ils font à la manière des basteleurs un massacre sur un eschaffaut, ou un discours de deux ou trois mois ... et autres telles badineries, que je laisse pour estre plus bref.³

This is an obvious kind of programme-building in all ages, perfectly

¹ Cf. Grace Frank, The medieval French drama, Oxford, 1954, pp. 245-6.

² J. Grévin, Théâtre complet, ed. cit., p. 8.

³ Ibid., p. 10.

normal to Boswell for example ("At night I was with Lady Crawford at The Beggar's Opera ... The farce was The Vintner Tricked"; "The play was False Delicacy, and the farce, A Peep behind the Curtain"),¹ though in the professional theatre of our own day it is perhaps less frequent. Furthermore, as Grévin says, the question of the personal specialisation of the dramatist, according to his temperament, must be considered:

car comme ainsi soit que des hommes, les uns soyent graves et sévères, les autres gaillards et joyeux, il est advenu que les premiers se sont mis à escrire des Tragédies graves et sévères, les seconds se sont exercez en Comédies gaillardes et joyeuses.²

Belleau's La reconnue and Jean-Antoine de Baïf's Le brave and L'eunuque are in comparison quite isolated. The title-page of Le brave, as we saw, tells us that it was performed on 28 January 1567 [n.s. 1568], but there is no record of a play of any other genre accompanying it. The "chantz recitez entre les actes de la comedie" are the only extraneous element; in view of Baïf's known interest in music,³ "recitez" may well mean "sung". It is only surprising that

¹ Boswell in search of a wife, London, 1957, pp. 141, 146.

² Grévin, Théâtre complet, p. 9.

³ Cf. Frances Yates, French academies of the sixteenth century, London, 1947, chapter III.

Baïf, who even founded the Académie de Musique et de Poésie precisely in order to recreate the practice of the ancients in uniting poetry and music, was not also interested (as far as we know) in uniting forms of drama.

After the Pléiade, no such ideals of the union of the forms of drama seem to have existed. Writers certainly wrote both tragedies and comedies — both the La Taille brothers, d'Amboise, Perrin — but not usually, apparently, for performance together. In the prologue to Godard's Les desguisez, there is a reference to the performance together of Godard's tragedy La Franciade and his comedy:

Car on a bien voulu, pour mieux vous contenter,
Dessus cette eschaffaut ici représenter
Ces deux poèmes-là, qui vous feront entendre
Que la fortune peut ses longues mains estendre
Aussi bien sur les grands comme sur les petits¹

and although this is not reliable evidence of an actual performance, it does show that Godard is attempting some meaningful relation between the two plays. He also claimed that he was the first in France to write both kinds of play, but this is the claim either of ignorance or of impudence. — Finally, with the classical generation — Mairet, Corneille, Rotrou — we have plays of both kinds, in considerable

¹ Ancien théâtre français, VII, p. 340.

numbers, but written rather as part of their authors' varied dramatic production, not for performance together on a single occasion.

Comic structure in theory and practice

Comic theory in the Renaissance, as we saw, was based above all on the commentaries of Donatus on Terentian practice. Beare quotes Michaut as saying that "the remarks of ... Donatus involve absurdities which would do honour to a professional humorist",¹ but at least in the Renaissance the remarks were taken perfectly seriously. On the question of the overall structure of a comedy, the central point at issue is that according to Horatian precept and the versions of Greek and Roman plays which the Renaissance knew, plays should have, and did have, five acts; yet the Aristotelian division involves only three divisions, a beginning, a middle and an end, or as Donatus puts it (apart from the prologue which is a mere introduction), protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe. Donatus' statement is as follows:

Comoedia per quatuor partes dividitur: Prologum, Protasin, Epitasin, Catastrophen. Prologus est velut praefatio quaedam fabulae, in quo solo licet praeter argumentum aliquid ad populum, vel ex Poetae vel ex

¹ W. Beare, The Roman stage, London, 1955, p. 207.

ipsius fabulae vel ex actoris commodo, loqui.
 Protasis primus est actus, initium drammatidis.
 Epitasis incrementum, processusque turbarum, ac
 totus, ut ita dixerim, nodus erroris. Catastrophe
 conversio rerum est ad iucundos exitus, patefacta
 cunctis cognitione gestorum.¹

Jacques Peletier du Mans takes over these ideas:

La Comedie a trois parties principales, sans le
 Prologue. La premiere, et la proposition du fet,
 au premier Acte: laquelle est apelee des Grecs
 Protasis. Et en elle s'explique une partie de
 tout l'Argument, pour tenir le Peuple en attente
 de connoître le surplus. La seconde, et
 l'avancement ou progres, que les Grecs disent
 Epitasis. C'est quand les affaires tombent en
 difficulte, e entre peur e esperance. La tierce,
 et la Catastrophe, soudaine conversion des choses
 au mieus.²

And the same ideas were taken over by most Renaissance Theorists.

Beare put it as follows: "The scholars of the Renaissance did their
 best to reconcile the two theories, five-act and three-part, but I
 agree with Leo ... that the two are mutually exclusive."³ The
 difficulty was certainly present. But in fact, as we shall see
 below, the act-division of Renaissance comedies was relatively

¹ De tragoedia et comoedia; quoted from H.W. Lawton, Handbook
 ..., p. 12.

² Art Poétique, ed. cit., II, vii, p. 187.

³ Beare, The Roman stage, p. 207.

unimportant, the action sometimes appearing to be perfectly continuous from the end of one act to the beginning of the next. And theoretical discussion of the parts of a comedy and their disposition was much more often concerned with Donatus' three parts than with act-division. Scaliger, for instance, apparently analysing the structure of actual plays more closely than many other critics,¹ concluded that a fourth division was necessary, which he called *catastasis*:

Protasis est, in qua proponitur et narratur summa rei sine declaratione exitus ... Epitasis, in qua turbæ aut excitantur, aut intenduntur. Catastasis, est vigor, ac status Fabulae, in qua res miscetur in ea fortunæ tempestate, in quam subducta est. Hanc partem multi non animadvertere; necessaria tamen est. Catastrophe, conversio negotii exagitati in tranquillitatem non expectatam. His partibus additus, uti dicebamus, Prologus ...²

I propose to examine the plays themselves, which after all are the important texts, to see what kind of structure was used in practice. In fact, all the surviving Renaissance comedies could be analysed according to Donatus' and Scaliger's

¹ "Scio a nonnullis tres tantum enumeratas, nos autem ad subtiliora semper animum appulimus" (Poetices libri septem, I, ix; Heidelberg, 1607 edn., p. 32.

² Ibid., p. 33.

principles, and it will be convenient to follow to some extent their divisions in discussing first the prologue (and epilogue) and then the rest of the plays — which may or may not correspond to their divisions. The emphasis will be, however, rather on discovering the function of such parts in the total dramatic effect than on establishing them on any theoretical grounds.

Prologues and epilogues

These two sections of the play lie outside the formal act- and scene-division. Both of them are normally found: Le reconnu and Les ramoneurs are the only ones of the regular comedies before Mélite without a prologue, and Les desguisez the only one without an epilogue. Mélite includes an epilogue.

The prologue has a long ancestry, both classical and medieval. Every play of Terence has a prologue, the Hecyra even two, in which the author addresses his audience more or less in polemical fashion. Jean Bodel's Jeu de Saint Nicolas has a prologue calling, quite traditionally by that time, for silence.¹ Giordano Bruno's Il Candelajo has an Antiprologo, a Proprologo, and a conventional Prologo; Trotterel in Les corrivaux, as we saw, plays with the tradition too, by having his prologue interrupted by someone

¹ Ed. F.J. Warne, Oxford, 1951, p. 4.

behind the curtain. Throughout this long period, the prologue's main function in terms of the theatre was to ease the transition from the audience's world to the players' world. This function is never essential, but it can be used for comic or other effect. It is only one of a number of devices used to establish a relationship with the audience (others are the soliloquy, the aside, the chorus in tragedy, but by virtue of its position its uses are different from any of these.

First, although the prologue is a less integral part of the play than, say, a chorus, it has the advantage of addressing the audience directly. In every one of the prologues we are considering, the audience is addressed as "vous". The speaker usually specifically states that he is not the author. But neither does he say he is an "actor", in cold reality; he usually leads the audience from the knowledge of where they are, over the boundary of illusion, until they and he are within the action of the play. For example:

Ce nonobstant, j'ai sceu de luy [le poète],
Comme une chose bien secrette,
Que ceste comedie est faicte
Sur le discours de quelque amour
Qui s'est conduit au carefour
De Saint-Sevrin; mais je vous prie,
D'autant que vous avez envie
D'estre secrets, de tenir coy:
Car je voy cy derrière moy
Le sire Josse.¹

¹ Les esbahis, prologue, ll. 62-71.

Although the speaker is specifically never the author, it is never said who he is. One may perhaps compare the epilogues, which perform the corresponding function of leading the audience back over the boundary of illusion; they are all spoken by one of the *dramatis personae*, who turns to the audience and addresses them directly. In production, any of the nine prologues could similarly be spoken by one of the *dramatis personae*, and may well have been so intended.¹

But if this were all, the prologue would be superfluous; it would be naïve to suppose that an audience is really in need of help over the boundary of illusion. In these plays, it has another function: to prepare the audience for the play by discussing comic practice and theory and how the particular play fits into these.² The prologue to L'Eugène, for example, claims that it is the first

¹ Orazio Vecchi's L'Amfiparnaso, Venice, 1597, is perhaps not strictly comparable. But the prologue of this musical setting of a commedia erudita is definitely put into the mouth of one of the characters, Lelio (cf. fig. 16). So is the prologue (the third, normal one) to Il Candelajo, which is spoken by a beadle. And it is fairly clear (though not conclusive) that the speaker of the prologue in Troterel's Les corrivaux, and Le Caché, are the two characters who open the play proper: Bragard and Gaillard.

² The prologue to the Jeu de Saint Nicolas does this too; cf. F.J. Warne's edition, Oxford, 1951, pp. xvii-xviii.

French comedy. The prologue to Les Neapolitaines explains that it is an exception to the usual rule that comedies are invented to please the "simple populace", and why. Les desguisez was printed together with a tragedy, La Franciade, and the prologue is at pains to point out that this juxtaposition is intended to show how fortune strikes down the great but merely plays with the humble and leaves them happy in the end. These ideas can be pedantic, as those of Les desguisez certainly are, but they appear to show at least that the audiences of these plays, as well as the authors, were interested in the theory behind them. For us, the examination of the prologues, beside other purely theoretical writings about comedy, has some points of interest to offer. First, in the later plays, the references to variety as a merit:

Or, j'espère qu'elle [cette comédie] vous plaira,
pour estre toute plaine de variables humeurs,
affections, plaisirs et passions¹

... la gentillesse de l'invention, le bel ordre,
la diversité du subject ...²

¹ Les esprits, Ancien théâtre français, V, p. 201. My italics (also in the quotations below). — The fact that this prologue is translated from the Italian need not affect its validity as an expression of Larivey's ideas.

² Les Neapolitaines, Ancien théâtre français, VII, p. 133.

Second, the emphasis on verbal style: the above extract from

Les Neapolitaines continues:

Les sages discours, les bons enseignements, sentences,
exemples et proverbes, les faceties et sornettes dont
elle est semée de toutes parts¹

while in the prologue to L'Eugène the list of qualities desirable
in a comedy reads:

Quels vers, quels ris, quel honneur et quels mots.²

The prologues usually say that their aim is to entertain
the audience. Only two, those to Les escoliers and Les desguisez,
overtly state a moral aim; the other seven have no reference at
all to any didactic purpose (cf. Les Neapolitaines, p. 134,
"plaisante et facétieuse"; Les esprits, p. 201, "J'espère qu'elle
vous plaira"). The supposed aim of the prologues, as we have seen,
is to ease the audience gently into the play, and it appears to
have been concluded that edification ~~even if intended~~, was not a
recommendation; for of these seven prologues, four belong to plays
whose authors, we know, expressed elsewhere their didactic intentions:

Or je reviens à la Comédie, qui est un discours
fabuleux ... par lequel on peult apprendre ce qui
est utile pour la vie, et au contraire cognoistre

¹ Ibid. .

² L'Eugène, ed. Balmas, p. 32.

ce que lon doit fuir, enseignez par le bonheur
ou malheur d'autrui.¹

Toutesfois, considerant que la Comedie, vray
miroüer de nos œuvres, n'est qu'une morale
filosofie, donnant lumière a toute honneste
discipline, et par consequent à toute vertu ...²

aux autres qui la liront elle apportera aussi
un grand proffict et contentement³

None of the prologues includes the full "Argument",⁴

but four of them (to L'Eugène, Les esbahis, Les esprits and Les
Contens) state specifically that they are not going to give details
of the plot because the play in itself will do that well enough.

One play, La reconnue, which has no prologue, has a printed
"Argument".

For us, the knowledge of theory of comedy that we can

¹ J. Grévin, Brief discours; quoted from H.W. Lawton,
Handbook, p. 55.

² Pierre de Larivey, Epistre to François d'Amboise to the
1579 collection, Ancien théâtre français, V, pp. 1-2.

³ François d'Amboise, Les Neapolitaines, preface, Ancien
théâtre français, VII, p. 239.

⁴ The prologue to La Taille's Les corrivaux gives a
good deal of the plot, but still leaves the outcome for the play
itself to show.

gain from these prologues has its interest. But their chief function, as we saw, lay in establishing a relationship with the audience; and it is here that their main interest, and such dramatic qualities as they have, are to be found. We shall return to them, and to the epilogues, in this context.

The epilogues perform the reverse function to the prologues, in bringing the audience back to their own world. They are always spoken by one of the actors, who turns to the audience and speaks to them. They are generally shorter than the prologues (L'Eugène has only one line). As the prologues contained the Silete, so the epilogues contain the Plaudite. Thus Rodomont in Les contens:

Mesdames, qui avez pris patience de nous ouïr
ceste aprèsdisnée, s'il vous plaist revenir en
ce lieu le jour des nocces de Basile et
Geneviefve, vous aurez le plaisir de voir
courir la bague ... Cependant, vous ferez bien
de vous retirer chez vous. Car voicy l'heure
que l'on commence à souper aux bonnes maisons.
Et si nostre comedie vous a esté agreable, je
vous prie de nous le faire cognoistre à quelque
signe d'allegresse (V, vi).

Exposition

The first part of a comedy in contemporary theory was the protasis. According to Donatus, the protasis is the first act of the play: "Protasis primus est actus, initium drammatidis"; and

again, "Protasis est primus actus fabulae, quo pars argumenti explicatur, pars reticetur ad populi expectationem tenendam".¹ To some extent, then, it is what we call the exposition. But clearly, the exposition and the first act are not necessarily synonymous: for instance, in Larivey's Les esprits the exposition is still going on in act two, by which time Urbain has obtained his Feliciane: the action has begun. Scaliger himself pointed out that the protasis (evidently for him meaning "exposition") of the Miles gloriosus comes in act two (though Baif, in his adaptation Le brave, moved it slightly ^{backward} ~~forward~~ into act one, scene two). By "actus", Donatus seems to have meant not necessarily an act in our sense (one of five formal sections of the play) but simply a part of the play; and the 16th century understood protasis in that sense, as the beginning, including the exposition but if necessary also including some action. Professor Herrick quotes Dryden's Eugenius:

First the protasis, or entrance, which gives light only to the characters of the persons, and proceeds very little into any part of the action.²

¹ De Tragoedia et Comoedia; H.W. Lawton, Handbook ..., pp. 12, 14, 16.

² Essay of Dramatic Poetry; M.T. Herrick, Comic theory in the sixteenth century, Urbana, 1950, p. 117.

The important point seems to be how the exposition as such is handled, especially as act-division in our sense, and in this period, is not so very significant in practice.

It is handled with a varying degree of conventionality. At its stiffest, it consists of one character telling another details that that character cannot but know already, the technique satirised by Sheridan in The Critic: "Mr. Puff, as he knows all this, why does Sir Walter go on telling him?".¹ This is found in only one play: surprisingly, Larivey's Les esprits, which is otherwise not a stiff or excessively conventional play. Hilaire tells his wife Elizabeth details that she cannot but know already, and she is so obviously a protatic character, a puppet figure provided for the purpose of the exposition, that she does not even appear at all in the rest of the play.

One degree less stiff — at least it is more honest — is the exposition by soliloquy. This is used in three plays: Les esbahis, La reconnue and Les desuisez. The first two share a peculiar feature: that the young lover (L'Advocat and L'Amoureux respectively) is not even mentioned in the opening soliloquy, and hardly at all until his arrival, in each case at II, i. Apart from

¹ The Critic, II, ii, Sheridan's Plays and Poems, ed. R.C. Rhodes, vol. II, Oxford, 1928, p. 219.

this, in Les esbahis one soliloquy suffices (I, i); in La reconnue Janne's first soliloquy and Maître Jehan's asides (I, i) tells us all except a minor detail or two; in Les déguisez two successive soliloquies are necessary (but as we shall see there is a structural reason for these).

The other plays all open with dialogue that is to some extent motivated. Les contents is the best motivated of all: at the opening of this play Louise has got her daughter Genevieve up at an unnaturally early hour, so that Genevieve has perfectly good reasons for wanting to know why — and thus justifying the exposition. This seems to be another example of the deliberate disguise of the conventions in this play; similar "realistic" preoccupations also blur the conventions of décor simultané and of time-sequence in it. Les Neapolitaines and Les escoliers use dialogue in which some action is already taking place: Augustin is trying to get Beta on to his side, and Marin is trying to get some truth out of Finet. In the first case, some slightly stiff expository details by Beta are necessary, and in the second, a supplementary monologue by Finet. L'Eugène is perhaps the most pleasing of all: Jodelle quite simply entertains us with the pleasures of the churchman's life, and of Eugène's in particular, before ever getting down to the exposition. When he does, he introduces it frankly with:

d'un cas nouveau ...
 M'est à ceste heure souvenu
 Pour lequel appelé t'avois¹

and the rest of the exposition is made in the same dialogue and in a supplementary monologue by Messire Jean (Florimond's late arrival in II, 1, is perhaps surprising; compare the late appearance of the lovers in Les esbahis and La reconneue). The technical ease of the exposition in this play is paralleled only in Les contens.

The division between exposition and action varies in sharpness. Sometimes an attempt is made to avoid an excessively conventional beginning by interlinking the two: thus in L'Eugène I, iii, Messire Jean appears at Guillaume's house, obeying orders received in I, 1, before Florimond appears to complete the exposition in II, 1. The plot of Les esprits is so complex that the exposition is not complete until II, 1, well after Urbain has bargained with Ruffin and got his Féliciane (even the dénouement of this play takes more than the usual act V and overflows backwards into act IV). An opening in medias res, with explanations following, is never used in these plays.²

¹ L'Eugène, II. 220-5.

² In three plays, strictly speaking the exposition is not complete until the end, when facts unknown to characters and audience alike, and necessary to the plot, are revealed: La reconneue, Les corrivaux and Les Neapolitaines.

As well as being integrated with the action, it is necessary that the exposition should be integrated with character. It is so in L'Eugène, where Eugène's sensuality is so dwelt on in the first part of the play before ever the exposition begins. It is ^{so} also in Les Neapolitaines, where the dialogue of Augustin and Beta shows both their characters clearly (Augustin the devoted and determined lover, Beta the ready-witted and bribable servant). In fact, all these plays, even Les escoliers, do considerably more than merely expound at the beginning: the individual character of the speakers is always made quite clear (even Elizabeth in Les esprits, who only appears in I, i), and the exposition of the plays generally shows, very competently, the atmosphere that is going to dominate (the hedonism of Les Neapolitaines, the sour misanthropy of La recongne). In plays as dependent on convention as these are, one might perhaps have expected the expositions to be stiffer than they in fact are.

Catastrophe or dénouement

It is convenient to take the last part of the structure next. Here practice bears out theory. The catastrophe in Donatus' words is the "conversio rerum ... ad iucundos exitus, patefacta cunctis cognitione gestorum", and again, the "explicatio fabulae" -- that is, a change in the action leading to a happy ending (the opposite of Aristotle's *μεταίσις* in tragedy) and the revelation to

everyone of the true state of things (e.g., that Pamphila is after all free-born, in the Eunuoh). Scaliger adds that the happy ending must be "non expectatam". All this is very similar to the extremely conventional ending of the modern detective story: a happy ending and the unexpected revelation of the true state of things.

Like the expositions, the catastrophes or dénouements are treated in practice with a varying degree of conventionality. Dei ex machina are not uncommon. Seven of the plays employ new characters who arrive more or less out of the blue to reveal new facts, or to influence the situation in a new way, so that the "happy ending" may be achieved. Les Neapolitaines introduces the new character of Marc-Aurel, a jeweller from Naples who has not been mentioned in the four preceding acts. He reveals new facts which resolve the situation. Nor is he the only one: the sub-plot (Dieghos and Gaster) is given another completely new character, the messenger Louppes, who reveals facts that persuade Dieghos to leave and thus remove his presence from the "happy ending". The arrival of these two new characters is certainly artificial; but the mystery surrounding Angelique's past and the constant references to it are bound to warn the reader that something of the kind will happen.

In La reconnue, Les corrivaux, Les esprits, Les desguisez, and Les ramoneurs, a parent (or parents) of one of the lovers involved arrives at the end of the play and makes the "happy ending" possible.

Since the "happy ending" always involves marriage, and since in terms of the plays marriage always involves settlements and family details, the very absence of the parent concerned in a way prepares his arrival. In addition, there is generally other preparation. In Les desguisez the plot at the end is already turning upon Olivier's father, and Passetrouvant is having to impersonate him, so that his arrival is prepared and effective. In Les corrivaux, the prologue has already told us of the father's existence. In Les esprits, the Urbain-Feliciane relationship has been prepared from as early as act I, and moreover Gerard's arrival is prepared two scenes before he actually arrives (IV, v). In La reconnue, some slight indication of Antoinette's father's arrival in Paris is given early in the play (I, v) when Maistre Jehan says:

il y a trois nuits
ue, sans me reposer, je suis
A faire l'extrait d'un procès,
En droit et matière d'exès,
D'un gentilhomme de Poitou.

but the main preparation lies in the obvious lack of parents of this girl whose marriage involves so many people. There is a second new character as well, in the dénouement of this play: the capitaine, who has been so much discussed in the preceding acts.

Much more preparation is made for the arrival of Agnès at the end of Les esbahis, whose function is to get Josse out of the

way of the "happy ending". We gradually learn a lot about her past, and about her affair with the Gentilhomme, before she appears in act V.

In all these cases, however, preparation must not be confused with motivation. In Les desguisez, it fits the pattern of the plot very well that Pierre Galand should arrive when he does, but that is not to say that his arrival is motivated in terms of the play. He has simply arrived in Toulouse, looking for his son, by chance at this particular time. The same applies to all the other examples: Agnès' arrival may be prepared, but it is mere coincidence that she, the Gentilhomme's whore, should turn out to be the same person as Josse's wife. Jodelle, in l'Eugène, achieves a better motivated plot by making the arrival of a new character, Florimond, the source of his plot and not a mere accidental impingement upon it. But in the later plays, it is clear that the arrival of new characters has become a convention that does not need to be motivated.

The acceptance of this convention is shown by comparing Grévin's Les esbahis with his La tresorière. La tresorière is the earlier play, and it is completely motivated by character, not by dei ex machina. Loys' anger at his rival's success precipitates the climax, all the reactions to which are in character. Despite this early production, however, in the later play Grévin introduced new characters at the end, showing that the internally motivated dénouement was not, for him, something that need necessarily be aimed at.

Two other plays have a dénouement that does not depend on new characters or facts: Les contents and Les escoliers. The technique of Les escoliers is primitive when compared with Les contents, but nevertheless it is true of both that the dénouement derives from character and not from chance. In Les escoliers, the inquisitive and meddlesome neighbour Friquet is credibly bullied into working on his neighbour Maclou to allow the marriage of Sobrin and Grassette; and the fathers Maclou and Marin, seeing that it is after all a perfectly suitable marriage, credibly decide to allow it after scolding their children. In Les contents similarly, after a good deal of quarrelling the parents of Basile and Genevieve, seeing that it is also a perfectly suitable marriage, decide to allow it. This is not, of course, to condemn the convention of dei ex machina merely on grounds of artificiality; nevertheless, it is of interest that the convention is not universal and that La tresorière, Les contents and Les escoliers, at least, successfully avoid it. The dénouement of Mélite, too, is internally motivated.

Loose ends are seldom left over. The captains often have a marriage provided for them as a consolation prize (La reconnue, Les Neapolitaines, Les desguisez). Belleau in La reconnue is so concerned with rounding off his play that practically all the characters, and what they will receive, are passed in review in order: L'Amoureux and Antoinette, Potiron, Monsieur, Madame, Maistre Jehan,

the captain, Janne. The plot of Les esprits is complex enough with its three pairs of eventually united lovers not to involve additional loose ends in any case. Les escoliers and Les corrivaux also have no loose ends. In L'Eugène, Matthieu the creditor is introduced so late into the play that he is hardly an integral part of the plot; nevertheless, he is not merely a loose end to be dealt with, for the way Eugène satisfies him is an effective demonstration of their respective characters. Les esbahis alone does not end so tidily. At the end of the play, L'Advocat's disguise is still unknown to Gerard, the guilt being attributed to Panthaleone. The revelation of the facts, and the marriage of L'Advocat and Madalène, are merely promised to the audience in the epilogue and not actually arranged within the play. But this is a solitary and not particularly significant example. There are no cases in these comedies where the play significantly ends with a question mark, like Tartuffe, or Leisanthrope, or Twelfth Night.

Epitasis and catastasis

The part of the play between exposition and dénouement is less clear-cut than either of them. One significant question is whether or not a climax occurs at any point to divide it up. La reconneue, Les esprits and Les desguisez have no such obvious climax. In the first, the unusual lack of a climax serves to build up the

suspense: Monsieur's machinations come nearer and nearer success until, only in the last act, he is finally foiled and the atmosphere cleared. In the second, the plot's complexity is sufficient entertainment in itself to sustain a single level of action throughout, and the three pairs of lovers simply continue to manage or mismanage their affairs until the dénouement. The success of Les desguisez depends on the gradual complication of the intrigue through four acts, one disguise and deception involving another, until the disguises are broken down, in strictly reverse order, in the last act.

In six other plays, the course of the action is changed about the half-way point. The change is precipitated by a seduction in Les contens, act III, and in Les esbahis and Les Neapolitaines between acts III and IV; by Richard's discovery of his master's rival's success in act III of La tresorière; by Florimond's violent removal of his furniture in act III of L'Eugène; and by an attempted rape in act III of Les corrivaux. In each case a reaction is provoked. Act IV of Les contens is occupied by Basile's attempted prevention of that reaction; act IV and part of act V of Les esbahis by Gerard's chaffing of Josse about the seduction, and Josse's violent reaction; act IV of Les Neapolitaines by discussion until the dei ex machina of act V provide the solution; acts IV and V of Les corrivaux by gradual reaction and solution; so that in each case the climax changes the course of the action. In L'Eugène there is a difference,

in that the removal of the furniture is not an unexpected disaster, but in a similar way reactions and eventually a solution are provoked.

Les escoliers represents a variation on this technique.

The climax occurs, not half way through the plot, but in act IV. After three acts of discussion and plotting, suddenly in act IV the pace quickens, a plot is laid, carried out and discovered all in the course of the act. It is quick, and effective; but the execution of this play as a whole is not good enough to carry it off.

The theoretical discussion of this part of a comedy, in the 16th century, concerns the meaning of Donatus' third part, epitasis, and of Scaliger's added fourth part, catastasis. Donatus calls the epitasis "incrementum, processusque turbarum, ac totus, ut ita dixerim, nodus erroris",¹ but as the term by elimination has to cover everything between the protasis and the catastrophe, this seems a little vague. It seems to me that Scaliger's two terms, between them, are much more closely related to actual dramatic practice both in Terence and in our comedies.

Epitasis, in qua turbæ aut excitantur, aut intenduntur.
Catastasis, est vigor, ac status Fabulae, in qua res
miscetur in ea fortunæ tempestate, in quam subducta est.²

¹ E.W. Lawton, Handbook ..., p. 12.

² Cf. above, p.

For example, in Les Neapolitaines the epitasis would cover everything that happens up to Camille's seduction of Virginie; that seduction and its immediate sequels would be the catastasis; and the solution of the problem, the catastrophe. It will be seen that the "climax" I have been discussing, and which I see as an important part of the dramatic structure, is in fact very close to Scaliger's catastasis.

Perils and obstacles

One of the main principles of plot-structure in these plays is the gradual removal of obstacles or perils in the way of the principal characters' ends. Those ends may be either moral or immoral. Eugène's aim is to enjoy Alix at his leisure; Loys' and the Protenotaire's aim in La tresorière is to enjoy Constante; Basile's aim in Les contents is to marry Geneviève (even though his methods may be the reverse of moral); Olivier's aim in Les desguisez is to marry Louise. The morality is irrelevant. In terms of plot-structure, the action is built on the removal of the perils or obstacles: Florimond's anger in L'Eugène, Louise's obstinacy in Les contents, and so on. The most frequent pattern is a double one: The young lover first has to win the girl, and then has to obtain the approval of society for marrying her (Les esbahis, La reconnue, Les corrivaux, Les esprits, Les contents, Les Neapolitaines, Les

desquisez, Les escoliers, Les ramoneurs). In terms of the structures we have been discussing, the overcoming of the first obstacle is Scaliger's catastasis; the overcoming of the second, the catastrophe. Although this applies to most of our comedies, some like L'Eugène have only one obstacle and so are outside this definition.

Mélite is a variant on this pattern. The obstacles to Tirsis and Mélite are Eraste's jealousy and machinations: we see how they begin, succeed, are discovered and overcome, and almost the whole action is built on them. The second obstacle, obtaining social approbation, is still there in the shape of Mélite's mother's approval, but it is so played down that we are hardly aware of it. The perils and obstacles are still the basis of the plot, but they come from the characters themselves, not from society outside; from other members of the same generation, not from an older generation.

The multiplication and removal of obstacles, then, form a principal feature of the plot-structure of these comedies. We have the testimony of Rayssiguier on the audience's reaction to it:

La plus grande part de ceux qui portent le teston
à l'hostel de Bourgogne veulent que l'on contente
leurs yeux par la diversité et changement de la
face du Theatre et que le grand nombre des accidens
et adventures extraordinaires leur ostent la
cognoissance du sujet.¹

¹ De Rayssiguier, preface to L'Aminte du Tasse. Tragi-comédie ...

Though Rayssiguier was doubtless referring mainly to tragi-comedy, behind his exaggeration there is some truth for comedy too. The truth is that there are often a number of "accidens et adventures extraordinaires"; the exaggeration, in that an audience if it is attentive is never forced to lose the thread of the plot. Characters on stage may be deceived, but we, the audience, are always aware of the deception. Thus, in Les esbahis, IV, 11, Gerard believes that L'Advocat is Josse, but it has been made quite clear to us that in fact L'Advocat is disguised. In the same play, the woman discussed by Claude and Le Gentilhomme (act III) is in fact Agnès, Josse's wife; as soon as it becomes necessary for us to know this, we are told it.

Disguises and plot-structure

One might have supposed, from the reputation that Renaissance comedies have as plays of complex intrigue, that disguise and deceit played a fundamental part in these plays. But in fact, only one of them uses disguise and deceit as the main structural principle of the plot; and it is indeed called Les desguisez. In this play Olivier, the hero, disguises himself as a valet; but then,

... pastoralle accommodée au Theatre François, Paris, 1632; quoted from H.C. Lancaster, "De Rayssiguier", Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XXIX (1922), p. 263.

needing to introduce himself in person, is obliged to use his valet disguised as himself; when his valet promises to produce his father, and this is not possible, a further impersonation becomes necessary. At one point in the play, we are confronted with a true Olivier and Pierre Galand, and a false pair of the same. The plot is built up upon the multiplication of disguises and upon their removal in reverse order.¹

In all the others, disguise and deceit are only a means of complicating the plot. The climax of the play is sometimes the discovery of the disguise or deceit; but this is not to say that the theme is the fundamental basis of the plot. In Les escoliers, four and a half acts pass before the disguise is adopted to enable the hero to attain his ends, and then it is put on and discovered in the course of a single act. In Les Neapolitaines, the only deceit is Camille's method of getting Cornélie out of the way, a very minor part of the plot. In L'Eugène, only Guillaume is deceived; but the action does not turn upon Guillaume, but upon Florimond, who is perfectly aware of the situation. In Les esbahis and Les contents the climax results from the disguise, but nevertheless is only one element

¹ The sequence of disguises is taken from the play's model, Ariosto's I Suppositi. Nevertheless, some important ways in which it is used and developed are Godard's: Maudolé's bragging in his master's clothes, and his confrontation with Prouventais.

in the plot among others. La reconnue, admittedly, uses the theme rather more: Monsieur's attempt to deceive his wife runs through all the play, while one pretence gets out of hand: the captain is announced to be dead, L'Amoureux plans to pretend he is alive, and in fact he turns out to have been alive all the time. — Although the theme occurs in all these plays to some extent, it is never fundamental to the plot in the play in which it is in, say, Du Ryer's Les Vendanges de Suresnes or Molière's Tartuffe. Nor do we yet have a pretence leading to a reality (as in Rotrou's Saint-Genest, where the actor playing a Christian becomes a Christian). Perhaps its most significant use is in the irony of Les contens, where real and pretended piety are continually played off against each other.

Nevertheless, the theme has its importance in the relationship which it makes possible with the audience. As we have seen, the audience is not deceived in these plays, but always knows perfectly well who is disguised as whom, and precisely what deceits are being attempted. The interest lies in watching the characters' reactions, and how the deceits are made and exposed.

Linked with this, and with the same kind of function, is the discrepancy between what is and what is not. The braggart soldiers claim to be brave but are regularly shown to be, in fact, the opposite. Josse in Les esbahis claims to be strong and capable of making love; in fact he has a cold and has to wear a fur coat. The

audience knows the facts very well in each case, not only from the plays themselves, but from the tradition which told them that a braggart soldier or an old man in love were not to be taken seriously.

Act- and scene-division

In 20th century plays, it is normal for an author to specify the divisions and subdivisions which he requires and which a producer will generally respect. He may use the division as a means of variety and contrast; after a scene of gaiety and movement the lights may be dimmed, or the scenery changed, for a more subdued scene. In the plays we are considering, the divisions are much less clear. Since the stage set was bound to remain the same, or almost the same, throughout the performance, changes of scene could not be used in this way for contrast. Speech and the entry and exit of characters were the main means available; and the formal scene-division in these plays is in fact based entirely on the entrance and exit of characters. A character may leave the stage entirely; or he may simply draw aside to another part of it, whence he may return a scene or two later (thus, perhaps, Les desguisez, IV, iii-v). Often it is not clear which is intended, nor does it need to be made clear, the question being left in the hands of the actors. The result is that the indicated scene-division is

less formalised than in 20th century (or even 17th century) plays, and that there are considerable inconsistencies from play to play, and even within a single play.¹

The theoretical basis is simple. Charles Estienne is typical:

Quand deux personnaiges ou trois avoient devisé et tenu propos ensemble, et que l'ung se retiroit, ou qu'il en venoit ung aultre en nouveau propos, ilz appelloient cela une scene, c'est a dire commutation ou variation de propos.²

Donatus also linked acts and scenes with entrances and exits, but took the principle to absurdity: "No character who has left the stage five times can exit any more" — which Scaliger saw was, to start with, literally untrue.³

La tresorière, Les esbahis and Les contens are, in fact, the only plays which are consistent within themselves. La

¹ The scene-division is not necessarily entirely the work of the author; and it may be that the printer, or a copyist, or other intermediary, had a hand in any inconsistencies.

² Epistre du traducteur au lecteur, Andrie, 1542 (H.W. Lawton, Handbook ..., p. 38).

³ Donatus quoted from Herrick, Comic theory ..., p. 109. Scaliger: "Personam eandem negat Donatus plus quinquies exire in prescenium, falso. Vel statim ipsa in Andria Davus ostendit haud ita esse, tum alibi saepe" (I, ix; ed. cit., p. 35).

tresorière and Les esbahis adopt one simple principle: the entry of a new character entails the declaration of a new scene. Thus, in Les esbahis, V, i, Panthaleone has a soliloquy overheard by Julien; dialogue between the two follows. Then new characters enter and V, ii is declared; but Panthaleone and Julien remain on-stage and a page or two later, within the same scene, return into the conversation. Les contents adds to this the principle that when a character is left alone on-stage for a soliloquy, a new scene is declared (I, vi, etc.).

None of the other plays is so consistent. The two basic principles remain the same: that the entry of a new character or his isolation on-stage for a soliloquy entails the declaration of a new scene. But in every case there are exceptions. In La reconnue, IV, ii, Madame enters in the middle of a scene, and a new scene is not declared, whereas when she entered after III, i the normal procedure was followed. In Les esprits, V, i, Ruffin knocks at the door, Severin appears and a new scene is declared (V, ii) as one would expect; but in III, i, Frontin had knocked at the door, Urbain had appeared in exactly the same way, and a new scene was not declared. After Les desguisez, III, vii, Olivier has a soliloquy entailing a new scene; but in II, iii, Grégoire's soliloquy does not entail one. Similar examples are found in all the other plays, including Mélite.

It might be thought that these inconsistencies are in fact intended, that they represent something to do with stage production. This does not appear to be so: in the examples I have cited (and others could be given) the inconsistencies occur in passages as nearly parallel as could be. We must conclude that although the basic principles remain constant, the details of the scene division cannot have been regarded as greatly significant. And in fact, of course, they are not of the greatest significance. If the entry of a character (possibly a very minor one) should justify a new scene, why should not his exit? Important divisions in the plays must be based on more fundamental criteria (e.g., a turning point in the plot, or an obviously important entry) which the producer and actors then as now must decide upon.

In one isolated case things are different: Perrin's Les escoliers. The division here is based upon other principles, and neither the entry nor the exit of a character entails a new scene. Thus, in the middle of IV, i, Corbon enters and no new scene is declared. And a typical plan for a scene in this play precisely involves an entry in the middle: soliloquy by A, entry of B, soliloquy by B, dialogue between A and B (thus I, v; II, i; II, ii; II, iv; III, ii; III, v; IV, ii; IV, vi; IV, viii; V, iii). The principle that is adopted appears to be that of a break of a tableau in performance, as is perfectly possible with

décor simultané. The acts are much more split up than usual; whereas, for example, in Les esprits act I, like the other acts, continues without a break, here act I consists of four separate tableaux: scenes i and ii shows Maclou and Finet, scene iii Grassette and Babilie, scene iv Sobrin, and scene v Friquet and Marin. The principles of construction and consequently of scene-division are quite different.

Act-division is less important than it is in later plays. The structure of the plot does correspond to some extent with the act-division, but the correspondence is not at all strict.¹ As far as either narrative or stage production is concerned, the division between two acts often has little more significance than a division between scenes. In Les Neapolitaines, II, i simply carries on the action of the last scene of Act I (iv), the same two characters being on stage without any apparent break in time. In Les desguisez, moving to the other extreme, a day or more seems to elapse at some point within act III. If the division were normally more important, one might say that in both these cases (and in others)

¹ Far less strict, either in classical or Renaissance practice, than Josse Bade's analysis of Terence would suggest: "In primo horum actuum ut plurimum explicatur argumentum. In secundo fabula agi incipit et ad finem tendere cupit. In tertio inseritur perturbatio et impedimentum et desperatio rei concupitae. In quarto remedium alicuius interventus affertur. In quinto autem omnia ad optatum finem ut iam saepe dixi perducuntur" (Praenotamenta, Lyons, 1502, xix; Handbook, . . . , p. 30)

the dramatists concerned were deliberately departing from a convention in order to obtain a particular effect; but this does not appear to be the case. Sometimes it would be difficult, without the written indications, to arrive at the same division into five acts as the author has established. That division may well be a concession to the contemporary theory of comedy, not an obstacle but at the same time not a thoroughly integral part of the structure of the play. It is clear that we should not give too great significance to it. The principles of construction are not dependent on formal scene-division, nor are they "realistic". Chamard criticised the scene-division in L'Eugène and La reconnue:

Les scènes se suivent et ne se lient pas.¹

Les scènes s'y succèdent à peu près au hasard,
sans préparation, sans enchaînement.²

But these plays gain their effect in other ways, and the criticism, though possibly valid for the 20th century armchair reader, is anachronistic.

Time-sequence

¹ Histoire de la Pléiade, II, p. 18.

² Ibid., III, 291.

One other convention of plot-structure remains to be discussed: the time-sequence. In every play except Les desguisez, Les ramoneurs and Mélite, the unity of time is observed, the action taking place within at most one day. Sometimes the time of day is explicitly and carefully stated as the play goes on; sometimes it is very vague. Five plays begin in the morning and end just before "souper" (about 6 p.m., according to Les contens, V, vi);¹ four state no precise time; Les desguisez occupies two not necessarily consecutive days; Les ramoneurs begins in the afternoon of one day and finishes two hours before supper the next; while Mélite, surprisingly, is the most loosely constructed of all.

L'Eugène is one of the five. At some time before III, 1, Messire Jean was "banqueting" with Guillaume and Alix; we presume this was the midday meal. In V, iv, Florimond says "desjà la nuict s'approche", and in V, v, the greeting "Bon soir" is used and supper

¹ The terms used for the two main meals of the day are "disner" and "souper", which I shall translate, for purposes of clarity, as "lunch" and "supper" respectively. The examples given by E. Huguet, Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle, vol. 3, Paris, 1946, pp. 208-9, show that "disner", when it did not mean "breakfast" (and it appears not to be used in this sense in the plays, where "déjeuner" is used, as in La reconneue, I, 1), meant a meal at midday or shortly after. O. Bloch and W. von Wartburg, in their Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue française, Paris, 1950, p. 176, state that "le premier des deux repas quotidiens ... avait lieu vers 10 heures au XVI siècle", but this is not confirmed by any text that I know. "Souper" is regularly the evening meal, served about 6 p.m.

is being prepared. Other indications of the passing of time, however, are few.

La reconnue also occupies one day: it begins straight after the night (I, i) and ends just before supper on the same day (V, v). As in L'Eugène, other indications are few.

Les esprits begins in the morning. In I, ii, Hilaire gives orders for the preparation of lunch. In I, v, Frontin goes off to prepare lunch for Fortuné, and one might assume that by his next appearance (II, i), he had lunched. But as late as III, vi, Frontin says to Severin "Venez dîner"; this may be simply inadvertence, or more likely may serve a dramatic purpose in emphasising the fact that Severin is so harassed that he has not eaten. In V, vii, Frontin goes off to prepare supper.

Les contens contains more precisions about time than any of the above, but each one serves a dramatic purpose. Thus, in I, i, it is so early that the sun is not even up, and the conversation bears very largely on why Louise and Genevieve are up at this unusually early hour. In II, v, it strikes 10 a.m. Lunch is eaten. An assignation made for 1 p.m. is carried out in III, iii. In IV, iv, the greeting "Bon vespre" is used. In IV, vi, Louise says it is an hour and a half since she locked "Eustache" into her "salle" (III, vii). In V, i, Anthoine says it is an hour since he went on his errand (IV, i). In the last scene of the play (V, vi) Basile says "Bon soir" rather

than "Bon vespre"; Louise says it is nearly 6 p.m. and invites the company to supper.

Les Neapolitaines is also precise. It occupies from "early" in the morning (I, ii) until just before supper. In II, iii, Dieghos says "Je croy qu'il s'approche de midi". It is the hour for lunch; Augustin and Angélique have this meal between III, ii and III, v, and Dieghos and Gaster between III, iii and III, vi. As early as III, xiii, Camille is able to plan to send Cornélie to do the shopping for supper, and in V, iii, the host of the Esou de France gives orders for Marc-Aurel's supper. In V, x, Louppes says he has been looking for Dieghos for eight hours — presumably since the morning. At the end of the play, supper is about to be served; the Plaudite takes the form: "Démenez les mains, et moy les dents."

The four plays that are not precise are La tresorière, Les esbahis, Les corrivaux and Les escoliers. The total references to time in these plays are as follows: In La tresorière, as early as II, iii, we hear "Vous sçavez qu'il est desjà tard", and the epilogue refers to a banquet which is about to be prepared. — In Les esbahis, by II, iv the mass is over. In I, iii, Panthaleone is said to come in the evening; but this can hardly be true of both his serenading appearances. There are, I think, no other indications; but the play could well take place in a single day. — Les corrivaux, too, could occupy one day only. By I, ii, some of the day has

certainly passed ("je n'ay fait que tracasser par toute la ville pour voir si je trouverois Claude ..."). In IV, iii, Felix says "nous n'avons point souppé", suggesting that supper-time is not far away. The traditional invitation to supper that one might have expected at the end does not occur. — Les escoliers is not merely imprecise, but clumsy. Already in II, i, Finet says "Le jour commence à se baisser"; but still in V, iii, it is not yet sunset. Between IV, iv and vi Sobrin has entered Marin's house, seduced Grassette and had a long conversation with her which is reported in scene vi; the shortness of the time is excessive even for the convention.

Les desguisez, the last of the 16th century comedies, is the only one of them that does not observe the unity of time. In III, ii, Olivier offers his services to Grégoire as valet, and in III, v he is well established in the household, having shown that he can play the spinet, read and write, and please Grégoire. The artificiality of this speed might perhaps be overlooked; but in fact even within the play's own terms two separate days must be concerned. In I, iii, lunch is served and Olivier and Maudolé go off to eat. In II, v, Maudolé has fresh news for Olivier, so that we must assume that time has passed; then Olivier offers his services, is accepted and establishes himself; and then in III, v, Louise says "despeschons nous, de grace, / D'aller aprester à disner".

This would be impossible if one day only were meant, but on the other hand there is no clear gap, so that whatever intention one assumes, the execution is clumsy. In V, v, a banquet, presumably supper, is about to be served, so that the first day occupies from before lunch to after it, and the second, not necessarily consecutive, from before lunch to just before supper.

All the 16th century plays, then, except only the last one, Les desguisez, take place within one day. Four plays do not give details of the passing of time. All the others occupy from morning until just before supper: that is, a time longer than the play would take in actual production. Therefore, an artificial dramatic convention is regularly being observed here, that the supposed time is longer than the acting time. This is normal and acceptable enough; but sometimes the artificiality is pressed to such a point that the convention demands more than passive acceptance. Thus, in Les Neapolitaines, III, xiii, Camille tells us what Angélique, Augustin and he have done since scene xi; and in III, xii, Gaster tells us what Dieghos has done since scene vii; in each case the time needed would be obviously much more than the acting time. At two points in this same play, no time at all is allowed for an action: in II, viii, Augustin sends Loys on an errand and already in the next scene (III, i) is impatiently awaiting his return, while in III, xiii, Camille plans the seduction of Virginie and already in the next scene

(IV, 1) he has carried it out. Perhaps intervals or at least gaps in the performance are to be assumed (cf. also L'Eugène, III, 1 - 11; III, 111 - IV, 1; IV, v - V, 1; La reconnu, V, 1 - 11; Les corrivaux, III, 11 - 1v; III, vi - IV, 1; Les esprits, II, v - III, 1).

Les contens, as we saw, minimised the artificiality of the décor simultané convention by the assumption that the compartments were near each other in terms of the play itself. It also minimises the artificiality of the time convention, in two ways. First, whereas Les Neapolitaines usually allows only a scene or two for a reported action to take place (see above), Les contens usually allows plenty of time (e.g., Rodomont is led off to prison in III, 11, and returns free in IV, 11). And second, although the play is precise when need be (for example, in the hurry of the early morning in I, 1, when the church bell is heard sounding the parts of the mass), when there is no dramatic need, it is vague. Most of acts III and IV take place simply in the "après-dînée", and we feel no lack of any indication of time, whereas in Les esbajis such a lack was jarring (why does Panthaleone give two serenades in one day? etc.).

In La reconnu, a particular kind of atmosphere is created by the passing of time. Everyone is in a hurry. It is time for Janne to get supper, or for Potiron to report to his master, or Monsieur cannot wait until night falls. The play is unique in this, and gains by it in two ways. First, the play is obviously more lively

if speeded along; second, this sense of hurry fits in well with the atmosphere that Belleau is creating. In fact, he has drawn for us a set of complaining and selfish people: Janne sick of her job, Madame tormenting Janne and her husband, the inquisitive Voisine, the adulterous Monsieur, Maistre Jean and the Gentilhomme de Poiotou complaining of the law courts. Their inability to be content with the moment is part of their character, and part of the character of the play.

Les ramoneurs and Mérite, perhaps surprisingly, are the only French Renaissance comedies whose action frankly occupies more than one day. In Les ramoneurs, I, vii, the Captain says "Allons nous coucher", and in I, viii there is a serenade in the "douce et favorable nuit", after which the Captain says "Il sera demain jour". A whole night, then, must be supposed between acts I and II. On the other hand, the action ends, exceptionally, two hours before dinner: in V, viii the Captain asks for "une couple d'heures de loisir au preparatif du souper"; so that the action does not take more than 24 hours. — Mérite is the loosest of the plays, since on Corneille's own admission in his Examen a week or fortnight must be assumed between acts I and II and again between acts II and III (e.g., l. 542 "Ce que depuis huit jours je bruslois de sçavoir").

As with the décor, the details of the time-sequence can only be discovered by combing through the plays. We generally find

them there only when they are essential to the plot (indeed, sometimes they are omitted where they seem necessary) and where they serve some dramatic purpose (especially L'Eugène and Les Neapolitaines). They do not seem to be there as part of a purely literal and non-scenic convention.

3. Character..

Sixteenth century theories of character in drama are dominated by the principles of decorum found in Aristotle, Cicero and Horace. Aristotle names six circumstances that differentiate individual men: emotions, habits, age, fortunes, sex and nationality, and says that the writer should:

endeavour always after the necessary or the probable; so that whenever such-and-such a personage says or does such-and-such a thing, it shall be the probable or necessary outcome of his character.¹

Cicero, writing in the Orator, says:

Moreover the orator must have an eye to propriety not only in thought but in language. For the same style and the same thoughts must not be used in portraying every condition in life, or every rank, position or age, and in fact a similar distinction must be made in respect of place, time and audience.

¹ Quoted from E.W. Robbins, Dramatic Characterization in Printed Commentaries on Terence, 1473-1600 (Illinois studies in language and literature, XXXV), Urbana, 1951, p. 38.

The universal rule, in oratory as in life, is to consider propriety. This depends on the subject under discussion, and on the character of both the speaker and the audience.¹

a statement about rhetoric applicable to literature and therefore to comedy too. In life, Castiglione's Courtier applied the concept to social intercourse. Quintilian's discussion of the term with reference to oratory even compared comedy:

In the case of the declaimers indeed it is of the first importance that they should consider what best suits each character; for they rarely play the role of advocates in their declamations. As a rule they impersonate sons, parents, rich men, old men, gentle or harsh of temper, misers, superstitious persons, cowards, and mockers, so that hardly even comic actors have to assume more numerous roles in their performances on the stage than these in their declamations.²

The list sounds like any of the lists in French Renaissance theorists, clearly derived from Terentian practice, which we examined in the chapter on comic theory above.

Such ideas, of course, tell us how dramatists ought to handle characters once they have created them; but not what sort of

¹ Quoted from M.T. Herrick, Comic theory in the sixteenth century, Urbana, 1964, p. 136.

² Ibid., p. 133.

characters they ought to create. In fact, in French Renaissance comedy the characters are those of French bourgeois society, systematised into a number of types at first based on native farces and on Terence, and later set into a whole comic tradition.¹ They are of course figures of their own time: the relationship of the valet to his master is the 16th century relationship, not the Roman one, and the relationship of the younger and older generations to each other is entirely that of Renaissance society. Since comedy in France was born in a University milieu, University characters are often found in the plays: the young lover, especially, is often a student (La recon nue, Les Neapolitaines, Les ramoneurs, etc.). Sometimes he is specifically a law student like L'Amoureux in La recon nue — and indeed, at a later date, like Corneille's hero Dorante in Le menteur.

It was concluded that these characters were fictional, and therefore might have whatever names the dramatist choose to give them, and might behave as the dramatist wished. However, the very fact that people established lists of characters found in Terentian comedy, considered as standard for comedy in general, meant that comic characters were looked upon not in the first place as individuals,

¹ Cf. H.W. Lawton, "La survivance des personnages térentiens", Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé, 1964, 85-94.

but as a series of figures representative of defined human types. The question of how far a character in a comedy should represent a human type and how far he might be independent according to the demands of the comedy, was much discussed: that is, how far he should observe social decorum and how far dramatic decorum. Thus, the impertinence of the slave Davus in Andria, III, ii, 492, was condemned as indecorous by Willichius,¹ because a slave should never mock his master. Dramatically, however, it is clear that Davus' impertinence is effective. Donatus applies the different kinds of decorum: thus, on Andria V, ii, he remarks that Simo's anger is reflected in his speech in that he says nothing but calls repeatedly for his slave — an example of decorum of emotions.² It is a question that comes to the fore in any discussion of characterisation not only on Terence but in any of the kinds of 16th century comedy that ultimately derive from him.

And if we turn to actual comic practice in France in the Renaissance, we find a breadth of possibilities parallel to the theoretical ones. In theory, a valet should respect his master: in fact, in Godard's Les desguisez, Maudolé almost fights his master for

¹ Herrick, Comic theory, p. 140.

² Robbins, Dramatic Characterization, p. 43.

a suit of clothes. In theory, a soldier brags; in fact, in L'Eugène, Florimond does not behave particularly as a soldier at all. Our 20th century ideas about "des personnages fixes, stéréotypes", should perhaps be modified. The set types resemble the masks which in any case Renaissance actors in many cases wore: and it is clear, for instance from Professor Nicoll's work, that the masks of the commedia dell'arte players were no hindrance to variety — indeed, in the hands of these particular highly experienced and technically accomplished actors, they were rather an aid. Similarly, in Renaissance comedy, when the audience saw an old man, a young lover, a soldier, they expected certain things. But these things were only a basis, a foundation upon which first the author and then the actor was free to make his own variations: the relationship between stage and auditorium was rather helped than hindered by the convention.

The question of decorum of character comes to the fore in the mixed genres. Plautus' Amphitruo, the first "tragi-comedy", was so called for reasons of decorum. Gods belong properly to tragedy, where they have certain norms of behaviour. If, as here, they are found in comedy, behaving and speaking like the normal middle-class figures of comedy, then a reason of decorum is called into existence for calling the play a tragi-comedy.

So, too, in Garnier's Bradamante. According to the

principles of decorum, a paladin of Charlemagne's court and his wife ought to behave and speak with proper dignity. Instead, Aymon and Beatrix are in a tragi-comedy with a plot which is structurally very like that of a Renaissance comedy, and they behave like normal middle-class people in such a comedy. There results the curious spectacle of Charlemagne's court coming forcibly down to earth without the justification of the Lucianic mockery of the gods which was Plautus'.

The definition of "stock" characters, then, is a delicate one.¹ Characters like the braggart or the young lover are recognisable from play to play; their social groupings are generally the same; yet in a number of ways it would be wrong to regard them only as a series of types. Plautus, in the prologue to the Captivi (ll. 57 ff.) boasts that his play is unusual in not containing characters such as the perjured slave dealer, the evil

¹ The stock characters are discussed in E. Rigal's "Les personnages conventionnels dans les comédies du XVI^e siècle", chapter 1 in his De Jodelle à Molière, Paris, 1911 (also in Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, IV (1897), 167-79. On the braggart, cf. especially O. Fest, Der Miles Gloriosus in der französischen Komödie von Beginn der Renaissance bis zu Molière, Erlangen, 1897 (Münchener Beiträge zur Romanischen und Englischen Philologie, XIII); D.C. Boughner, The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy, Minneapolis, 1954; and M.R. Lida de Malkiel, "El fanfarrón en el teatro del Renacimiento", Romance Philology, XI (1957-8), 268-91. There is literature on the other types of Renaissance comedy; cf. for example C. Dietschy, Die "Dame d'intrigue" in der französischen Originalkomödie des XVI und XVII Jahrhunderts, Halle, 1916 (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, 64).

courtesan, or the braggart warrior, which are common in his other plays.¹ The Renaissance authors, however, do not avoid types; how, precisely, do they use them?

Nearly always, the stock characters are used as a basis for variation. The old man in love, the timid heroine, and so on, are all certainly found again and again, but it is rare to find any one of them unelaborated, that is without the addition of some feature or other which makes the character in question more than a mere example of the type. 19th century Molière critics thought it important — as did Molière's contemporaries — that characters should be universal, typical of the human race as a whole. But this cannot be done literally. Drama demands something more than a character so general, or than a simple type; and in these plays nearly always the stock characters are used as a basis for variation: recognition by the audience is assumed, so that upon a familiar "type" may be built up an individual character for use within the play in question. Thus, Josse in Les esbahis is an "old man in love"; but in act V he is given certain "braggart" characteristics which make him something more than the stock character.

On the other hand, the characters are never very profound.

¹ Cited by G.E. Duckworth, The nature of Roman comedy. Princeton, 1952, p. 236.

Severin in Les esprits is perhaps the nearest approach in these plays to the minute exploration of a foible which we find in Molière: a miser to whom Molière in fact owed some features of his L'avare. Usually, the characters are developed enough to hold the audience's attention, but not deeply enough ever to make character more important and significant than plot.¹ Seldom, too, does a character develop in the course of a play: the abbé Eugène in Jodelle's play is the only example I have found, who at the beginning of the play, according to Messire Jean, does not think enough of the future to guard against misfortune (I, ii); in the middle shows himself quite unable to think of a solution (II, iv; III, ii; IV, ii; IV, iv); and at the end shows himself practical both in thinking of a solution (V, i) and in carrying it out (V, ii). Development was not expected of characters in comedy. Quintilian

¹ If the evaluation of a play is in question, other factors must be considered than the mere relative importance in it of "comédie d'intrigue" and "comédie de caractère". The two must be integrated. Charles gave excessive importance to that relation when he wrote: "La comédie d'intrigue, qui se plaît à exciter la curiosité et à satisfaire l'imagination, recherche les aventures, les surprises du hasard; elle peint l'imbroglio des événements, l'imprévu de la vie extérieure, tout ce qui ne dépend pas de l'homme, tout ce qui, par l'illusion ou l'équivoque, trouble l'intelligence ... La comédie de caractère offre un autre spectacle aux hommes, qu'elle suppose nés libres et raisonnables ... Son objet, qui est l'étude, la connaissance et la peinture de l'humanité, l'élève elle-même au degré le plus haut de la littérature." (La comédie, pp. 213-4).

had said that comedy resembled ethos, or the set definition of a fixed personality, as distinct from tragedy which resembled pathos, a mood or phase of feeling.¹

It would be wrong to suggest too many qualities for these plays; and it may be a fault in them, considered as a group, that their characters are in fact not profound. We admire Twelfth Night for the depth of Malvolio's character as well as for the suppleness of the plot or the beauty of the language; we admire the Eumuchus in the same way. Even in the best of these plays — L'Écuyer, Les contes, Les ramoneurs — though the characterisation may be skilful it very seldom shows us any character in depth, a fault that Professor Lawton blames on the excessively bookish quality of the imitation in them.² The most profound is probably Severin in Les esprits. This miser goes through deceits and misfortunes, his beloved treasure has been stolen: and then (IV, iii) he is able to realise that his miserliness has in fact been an offence to himself:

En un meisme jour j'ay perdu deux mille escuz,
j'ay esté desnyaisé d'un ruby, trompé par
Frontin et deshonoré par Urbain, de façon que

¹ Cf. M.C. Bradbrook, The growth and structure of Elizabethan comedy, London, 1955, p. 43.

² "La survivance des personnages térentiens", pp. 93-4.

je n'atten plus que la mort. O fortune, que
tu es cruelle, quand tu delibères faire mal
à quelqu'un! Je n'ay jamais offensé que
moy-mesme.¹

But however this may be, it is certainly apparent that in the hands of a skilful author, the stock characters provide not a mere Punch and Judy show with unvarying characters, but an entertainment in which variation upon the familiar figures serves to ring the changes upon the many relationships possible. The variation of each character is done with the ensemble of all the rest in mind.

A good example is Josse in Grévin's Les esbahis. We saw that he is the "old man in love" who in act V is given some "braggart" characteristics. But there is already a braggart in the play, Panthaleone; and he for his part, compared with the braggarts in later plays, is greatly toned down.² Much of the last

¹ Ancien théâtre français, V, p. 266.

² Pantalone in the Italian plays is of course not usually a braggart; he is properly a magnifico, an elderly citizen (cf. Allardyce Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, esp. pp. 44-55). When he becomes a serenading lover, as he is in Les esbahis, this is only as a variation on his normal character, not as a replacement for it. It appears that Grévin did not know, or deliberately ignored, the characteristics of Pantalone in Italy. Cf. R.C.D. Perman, "The influence of the commedia dell'arte on the French theatre before 1640", French Studies, IX (1955), p. 295.

act is built upon these two characters and the inter-relationship of their two different kinds of braggado. "Braggarts" are also used in this way in Les desguisez, where the regular stock character, Prouventard, is fairly standard, but where he is put side by side with a valet given certain "braggart" characteristics (Maudolé). In Les Neapolitaines, a stock "timid heroine" (Virginie) is used side by side with a supposed widow and her mother, Angélique, who is not a stock character. In Les contens, the entremetteuse Françoise is developed by supposed piety, played off against the real piety of Geneviève's mother, Louise.

In short, to use a stock character as such, without development, is to treat him only as an individual, with very limited reference to those around him, and is therefore suitable only for comparatively undeveloped drama. These plays, on the other hand, are built up on the relationship between all the characters; and for this, it is necessary that a stock character, if used at all, should be modified to suit the dramatic situations envisaged. And in fact, we find that a stock character pure and simple is a rarity in these plays.¹ Giordano Bruno has a comment which is to the point

¹ L'Eugène is the earliest of the comedies and so a special case. Guillaume is typical of the coeu of the farce; Eugène is a much developed example of the pleasure-seeking churchman of the farce; but neither of the two soldiers is typical of the braggart in any source available to Jodelle. Most of the play's characters seem ...

on his own use of stock characters in Il Candelaio, and which is entirely true for the French comedies:

Son tre materie principali intessute in sieme
nela presante comedia L'amor di Bonifa[cio]
l'alchimia di Bartholomeo et la pedantaria di
Mamphurio. Però per la cognition distinta de
suggetti, raggion dell'ordine, et evidenza
dell'artificiose testura: Rapportiamo prima
da per lui l'insipido amante, secondo il
sordido avaro. Terzo il goffo pedante, Dequali
l'insipido non é senza goffaria, et sordidezza.
Il sordido é parimente insipido et goffo, Et
il goffo non é men sordido et insipido che
goffo.¹

None of the comedies spotlights one single character at the expense of the others. It is seldom even possible to say that one character is more important than the others: indeed, the very titles of nearly all the comedies are in the plural: Les esbahis, Les esprits, Les ramoneurs. The plot-structure is always constructed on a group, as with the commedia dell'arte, and as with Terence; whereas Molière, for instance, following Corneille, often focussed his plots on a single character: L'avare, Le médecin malgré lui, Le malade imaginaire.

... to have an impression of newness; and as a group, they can certainly not be set within any single comic tradition.

1

Giordano Bruno, Candelaio comedia del Bruno Nolano, Paris, 1532, f. ã iii v.

As examples, I shall discuss four types: the old man in love, the servant, the braggart soldier, and the young heroine. The old man in love is one of the simplest. He appears in Josse in Les esbahis and Monsieur in La reconnue. Josse believes his wife is dead, and he wishes to marry Madalène; he has a cough and a cold, but otherwise believes himself vigorous. This might be the end of his character; but Grévin has widened the canvas by the comic contrast with another (similarly unconventional) braggart type. Monsieur has the more complex aim of marrying Antoinette off to his clerk to serve his own ends, and the interest of his character lies not only in his being an "old man in love", but in the considerable amount of ingenuity he is forced to deploy towards those ends.

The servant is a new creation of Renaissance comedy. He is not found as such in Terence or Plautus, although certain features of the Roman slave and parasite survive in him.¹ He is part of the same process of 16th century modernisation of comedy which resulted in the substitution of European proper names for Graeco-Roman ones, and of Italian and French marriage customs and problems for Roman ones. The Roman slave was bound to obey his

¹ Cf. G.E. Duckworth, The nature of Roman comedy, Princeton, 1952, pp. 249-53 and 265-7 respectively.

master, and might fear a beating if he did not. The Renaissance servant, however, is not bound in the same way, whether he is called valet, serviteur, or laquais. He is based upon something in 16th century society which had no precise equivalent in the Roman.

Servants in these plays are never used except in conjunction with their masters: as one of a pair. There is no such thing as a "servant" type isolated in a play, looking for a job. Whether in the social context of carrying out orders for his master, or in other dramatic terms, the servant is never seen as anything other than a foil to a master. He may be a fool and the master self-possessed (Mandolé and Clivier in Les desguisez); or the reverse (Gaster and Don Dieghos in Les Neapolitaines). He may talk to the audience about his master (Antoine in Les esbahis, Messire Jean in L'Eugène). Or he may express ideas that balance his master's (anti-heroism, or anti-Petrarchan love). No one detail (such as anti-heroism) is common to all these servants; their social standing and their balancing against their masters are the only constant features.

Once these principles of the novelty of the role and its function are grasped, the almost infinite variety of the servants in these plays makes sense. Some mock their masters (Gaster in Les Neapolitaines), some serve them faithfully (Antoine in Les contents). Some are moral and serious-minded (Finet in Les escoliers), most are

cynical. And so on. The servant figure is in fact probably the role in which the technique of variation upon a stock character is best applied.

Among all the different creations, the two most successful are probably Gaster in Les Neapolitaines and Maudolé in Les desguisez. Gaster is a development of the Gnatho of Terence's Eunuch. In a fine soliloquy (I, iv), he proclaims his policy: to attach himself to a master and get as much out of him as possible. He is a maquereau with no compunctions about it; a lively cynic, drawn with much verve and verbal richness. — Maudolé is the best thing about Les desguisez, and an original creation by Godard.¹ He is a fool as well as a valet; timid, but swaggering when he is in his master's clothes ("Je pompe, je morgue, je brave") — until he is attacked. He cannot even wear his master's clothes properly (III, i), while he quite forgets himself in thinking about the coming banquet in V, v. His bragging and his folly, however, make him a figure of fun himself, so that he cannot be so much an intermediary between the audience and the principal characters as some of the other servants are. That function is performed in this play by Vadupié, Prouventard's laquais.

¹ Neither he, nor, Prouventard, against whom he is set, appears in Ariosto's I Suppositi, which is the model for Les desguisez.

It is done mostly by means of asides: of Vadupié's 30 speeches exactly half are asides,¹ while in the other plays, such asides as there are are nearly always in the mouth of servants.

We have seen that one of the servant's functions is to serve as a counter-balance, in the audience's eyes, to his master's ideas. This applies in particular to two kinds of ideas: uplifted Petrarchan sentiments in love, and valour in combat. The servant regularly expresses his more down-to-earth views on love, and his greater care for his own skin, respectively. Thus, in Les corrivaux, I, ii, Filadelfe expresses his love for Fleurdelys:

mais quoy? qui est celuy qui ne connoit, les
forces d'amour? Qui ne connoit qu'il est aveugle,
jeune et volage, sans loy et sans raison? C'est
par luy que je n'ay non plus de repos que si
j'avois le vif argent sous les pieds.

while in scene iv his valet Gillet is overheard:

Vrayement je seroy bien un grand sot, pendant
que mon maistre demaine une vie amoureuse, si
de ma part je ne me jettois aussi sur l'amour:
non point de la sorte qu'il fait, car il est de
ces amoureux transis, qui ne s'amusent qu'à une,
et sont deux ou trois ans à lanterner, sans qu'à
la fin ils viennent au point.

Boniface's cowardliness in La tresorfière, IV, v, is typical:

¹ 14 are asides; 14 are direct speech; 2 contain both.

Car, quand j'ai ouy ce beau mesnage,
Ainsi qu'un homme de courage
J'ai gaigné le grenier au foin.

Like the servants, the braggart soldiers differ considerably from each other, perhaps because of the widely differing sources used. Florimond and Arnault in L'Eugène are the first examples in date, owing more to Plautus than to Italian models. But they are more than milites gloriosi. Arnault, the irascible Gascon, is the more developed of the two, but even he can hardly be compared to Plautus' Pyrgopolynices.

Mais j'en renie tous les cieux
Si je ne fais tomber en bas
Tant de jambes et tant de bras
Que Paris en sera pavé. (III, i)

All this is merely a part of a fuller character (he is a Gascon, a good soldier, a faithful follower of Florimond, and a scholar as well); we laugh, but only temporarily. In general, Jodelle uses these characters to praise, not to mock, the profession of arms, while there is no question of the boast being exposed as an empty boast, as in Plautus or in later French comedy. Although Messire Jean says of them

Sont de ceux, dont l'un vend sa terre,
L'autre un moulin à vent chevauche, (IV, iv)

they are in fact taken quite seriously.

The next braggart, Panthaleone in Grévin's Les esbahis, is also untypical. As we have seen, he is not the equivalent of the Italian Pantalone. Dr. Fernan calls him a "young fop". He sings, in Italian,¹ to his lute; declares himself in love, but does little about it. Two passages link him with the braggart tradition:

Vous le verrez tantost vanter,
Tantost elever ses beaux faicts ... (II, iii)

and act V, where he goes through the standard process of boasts, threats and exposure when Julien calls his bluff and forces him to retreat.

These two passages are scarcely sufficient to make him a full and successful character. His whole role, in fact, is handled with a certain gaucherie: he appears twice only, his role is peripheral to the main plot, he mixes confusingly the roles of Petrarchan lover and soldier, his very name is inappropriate to either role. In V, iv, his attempted intervention ("Messer Gerard, monstrez-vous sage") also seems inappropriate to either role.

The braggart soldier begins to be a recognisable

¹ Not macaronic French-Italian, as D.C. Boughner states (The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy, p. 126).

type in French Renaissance comedy with "Le capitaine" in Belleau's La reconneue.¹ The others in the plays we are considering are Don Dieghos in Les Neapolitaines, Rodomont in Les contens, ~~and~~ Prouventard in Les desguisez, and Scanderlon in Les ^{ramonnewt} 6

One feature only is constant to all of them: the gap between what this braggart soldier boasts and what he is. This gap is usually made apparent by a threefold process of boasts, threats, and exposure. Thus, in Les desguisez, II, 1, Prouventard boasts in a standard form of gab:

J'ai fait connoistre ma vaillance
Au pays de Flandre, ou j'ay mis
Cent fois à sac les ennemis ...

He threatens Grégoire:

Si vous ne me rendez le mien,
Je le r'auray bien par justice.
Il n'est chose que je ne puisse.
Par le sang, le ventre et la mort!
Vous vous repentirez du tort
Que vous me faistes. (II, iv)

But soon he sees a man with a sword:

¹ He is named in the *dramatis personae* as "Le capitaine Rodomont"; but in fact his speeches merely bear the heading "Le capitaine" and he is never actually named in the play. In V, iv, Maistre Jehan says he "tranche là du Rodomont" as though this were not his name.

C'est de la part peut-estre aussi
 Du sire Gregoire ...
 Mais je les empescheray bien
 De me tenir et me surprendre,
 Et deussé-je la fuite prendre.
 Mais s'ils viennent pour me frapper,
 Par où me pourray-je eschapper? (III, v)

It may be fighting that is at stake (Prouventard) or it may be love (Dieghos). In any case the main dramatic function of these captains is to create a gap between what is claimed and what is performed.

Seen in this light, their significance in the dramatic structure emerges. The difference between what is claimed and what is performed is, after all, one of the main structural principles upon which Renaissance comedy is built. We might compare the moral situation: the actual lack of virtue in these plays coupled with concern for the outward appearance of it. The braggarts have their own application of it, sometimes simple, and sometimes more developed as in Les desguisez where a valet (Mandolé) brags and is set against the braggart soldier proper.

It may be surprising, in view of the evident cowardliness of the captains, that they are readily accepted into society. The craven Prouventard is respected and indeed feared by Grégoire, and is twice offered an advantageous marriage.

Rodomont in Les contens is offered one as well, but refuses;

Dieghos is summoned off to a good marriage at home; the captain in La reconne is a highly respected member of the king's forces, who at the end is given a spare niece and a job.

(Panthaleone is an exception in this respect as in others.)

They may all be exposed as cowards, but instead of being chased off the stage at the end, they are all given a consolation prize of some sort. This may be acceptable as part of the required

"happy ending", but in La reconne at least leads to a dramatic inconsistency: the captain's gab, considered as a verbal

exercise and entertainment, is as good as any that will be found in these comedies; yet it is quite irrelevant both to the action of the play and to his known really valorous character. It is

the first part of the "boasts, threats, exposure" pattern, well executed but isolated and quite unintegrated. Dramatically, it

is odd that a character should boast emptily and be mocked — and yet should be accepted in the end. Plautus' *Pyrgopolynices* is not accepted in this way. It may be that the high esteem in which the profession of arms was held in the 16th century accounts for it:

the braggart may personally be a fool and a coward, but his profession is an honourable one.

The heroines, unlike the servants and captains, are nearly all of a type. Possibly played by boys and therefore by less

experienced actors, their parts are generally small. In Les esbahis, Madalène appears only in II, vi and IV, v, a timid, lamenting creature. In La reconnue, Antoinette appears only in I, iii and IV, i-ii. She is a devout Huguenot, with little will of her own, and certainly not in control of the marital intrigues going on around her. The heroines of Les esprits do not appear, or at least speak, at all, the only female parts being a mature wife and mother, and a maid.¹ In Les Neapolitaines, Angélique appears only in III, vi-viii, and IV, ii. Nevertheless, she is certainly not timid; but then she is supposed to be a widow and is therefore not the typical young heroine. That role is filled by Virginie, whose one appearance in the play (III, viii-ix) shows her to be as timid as any. In Les desguisez, Louise appears more often than is usual (II, iii; III, v and ix; IV, i and iii; V, iv and v), but she is extraordinarily timid. She breathes no word of protest at her father's command, either to him or to her maid; she leaves Olivier immediately when he reveals his disguise; her fear for her reputation is obsessive. In Les corrivaux,

¹ The absence of the three heroines, around whom the plot revolves, certainly creates an odd impression. But as the play is an adaptation from the Italian, their absence may be accounted for by Italian rather than French stage practice.

Restitue appears only in I, i, while Fleurdelys does not appear at all. Most of the exposition is put into Restitue's mouth in this one early appearance, thus combining the demands of the exposition with a short appearance of the heroine.

The heroines, then, are very similar — more so perhaps than any other types to be found in these plays. Whereas the servants were different from play to play, these are usually exactly what one expects. A set piece that occurs again and again is the lament by the heroine on her unfortunate position, of which a typical example is this from Les esbahis:¹

MADALENE, seule

Hé! la fleur de mes jeunes ans
S'en ira-elle ainsi perdue,
Et la joye tant attendue
Mise à neant, par la contrainte
D'une trop envieuse crainte?
C'est or' que je sen la puissance
D'amour; mais, las! mon impuissance,
Les menaces et la promesse
M'ont remis en telle destresse,
Qu'ores que je veuille une chose,
Toutesfois l'honneur s'y oppose ...

One might suppose that this similarity is due to the lack of independence which unmarried daughters had, as a matter of historical fact, in the Renaissance. Only one heroine is more

determined: Grasset in Les escoliers, who, independent or not, aims to follow her choice by one means or another.

It would be tiresome to examine all the characters in all these plays. Besides the old man in love, the servant, the braggart and the heroine, two of the most important are the young inamorato and the parent concerned for his child's welfare. Some few characters do not belong to a type. One is the Gentleman in Les esbahis, a sensualist whose opinions contrast with his friend the Advocate's idealism and who reminds us of Tircis in the first scene of Mélite; and Angélique in Les Neapolitaines, a supposed widow with a bigger part in the play than any heroine in these comedies.

Character and plot are necessarily closely linked, and the more closely, the more coherent the whole play. Les contents and L'Eugène achieve the closest synthesis of the two, in the sense that they depend only on the working out of the factors of situation and character given us in the exposition. In L'Eugène, the abbé's lack of practicality and Hélène's lack of response to Florimond led to all the trouble in the past, Guillaume's simplicity made it possible, and Florimond's anger brings it to a head. Every other French Renaissance comedy before Mélite, without exception, uses at least one deus ex machina.

Such a use of types is comparatively sophisticated.

Admittedly it needs a finer dramatist than we are dealing with here to make out of a type a full character, but at the same time the inferior effect is avoided of mere recognition of the type and nothing more. In nearly every case, the author has indicated a type, so that the audience knows approximately what to expect; and then he has played upon this knowledge on their part by creating a variation upon that type. The technique is one more use of the theatrical relationship of the author and his audience. Among the most successful achievements are Josse in Les esbahis, the braggart old man in love; Maudolé, the foolish valet in Les desguisez; Françoise, the pious macquerelle in Les contens — in each case the success is due to the combination of something expected with something new.

4. Speech.

The verbal style of comedy.

When François d'Amboise, under his pseudonym Thierry de Timofile, praised his own comedy Les Neapolitaines, he emphasised the verbal style:

en cest-cy on trouvera un françois aussi pur
et correct qu'il s'en soit veu depuis que nostre
langue est montée à ce comble, à l'aide de tant
de laborieux et subtils esprits qui y ont chacun
contribué de leur travail et diligence pour la
rendre polie et parfaicte. La lecture et la
conferance en rendront seur tesmoignage, outre

la gentillesse de l'invention, le bel ordre,
la diversité du subject, les sages discours,
les bons enseignemens, sentences, exemples
et proverbes, les facettes et sornettes dont
elle est semée de toutes parts ...¹

Except for the vague "La gentillesse de l'invention, le bel ordre, la diversité du subject", all these virtues refer to the verbal style. Perhaps this is not surprising in a man who wrote a great deal and published only one play. But it is a common emphasis in other writers too: Larivey in his long Epistre to d'Amboise discusses only the ethics of comedy and its language — not its plot, its characterisation, or its staging. Miss Bradbrook says that this same emphasis is found in England too: "The development of Elizabethan comedy is very largely the development of its language"; and "To examine the critical evolution of comic writing is ... to examine the general theory of rhetoric as applied to poetry".²

For verbal style as well as for characterisation, ideas of decorum are again all-important. A character must speak, not only behave, as his character and situation demand. La Fresnaye's discussion of decorum in comedy is dominated by the idea of speech:

¹ Les Neapolitaines, preface to Charles, duc de Luxembourg, Ancien théâtre français, VII, p. 239.

² M.C. Bradbrook, Elizabethan comedy, pp. 49 and 32.

Un doux parler est propre aux hommes tels que toy [Ragot];
 Aux hommes furieux paroles furieuses,
 Lascives aux lascifs, et aux joyeux joyeuses;
 Et le sage propos et le grave discours
 A quiconque a passé de jeunesse le cours.
 Car Nature premier dedans nous a formée
 L'impression de tout pour la rendre exprimée
 Par le parler après ...
 Il faut que la personne à propos discourante
 Suive sa passion pour estre bien disante.¹

The plays do in fact follow these ideas. In Les contens, III, ix, the servants Antoine and Ferrette have a series of indecent exchanges suitable for the character of servants; while in the same play, V, ii, Basile and Genevieve have a "love-duet" couched in the loftiest terms. The two take place at the same window of the same house, and are clearly meant to highlight each other. In such cases, the vocabulary, syntax and imagery vary greatly, though there is no equivalent to Shakespeare's use of a mixture of verse and prose, or Bodel's use of different metres for different characters, for the medium remains the same throughout each of these plays without exception. The braggarts, the older generation, the young lovers, all have their individual kinds of speech. The verbal difference between servant and master is one of the most important and clearly defined, since it is one of the

¹ Art Poétique, I, ll. 838-45 and 851-2; quoted from Lawton, Handbook, p. 104.

clearest of social distinctions. Here are Olivier and Maudolé in Les desguisez: the master-in love expresses his misery with a typical invocation ("O petit dieutelet ailé"); Godard makes the servant first express his interest in food, and is quite conventional, but then plays with the master-servant convention by making Maudolé adopt the opposite view:

Maudolé: J'ai le foy et la rate esmue,
Tant il m'a fallu cheminer
Pour vous dire qu'on va disner
Et qu'on s'est desjà mis à table.

Olivier: Helas!

Maudolé: Quel mot espouvantable!
Hé! se faut-il ainsi facher
Quant o'est qu'on parle de mascher?
Depuis un temps sans cesse il grogne
Et contrefait toujours la trogne
De quelque pourceau mau-bruslé.

Olivier: O petit dieutelet ailé!

Maudolé: Il me faut en tristesse mettre:
"Si joyeux ou triste est le maistre,
"Le valet le doit estre causei."
Ah! hélas! que j'ay de souci,
D'ennuy, de peine et fascherie!
Que ma pressure en est marrie!

Olivier: O petit dieutelet ailé!

Maudolé: Helas!

Olivier: Hé! qu'a mon Maudolé? ...¹

¹ Jean Godard, Les desguisez, I, iii.; Ancien théâtre français, VII, pp. 348-9.

The frequent proverbs and popular sayings like Maudolé's "Si joyeux ou triste est le maistre, / Le valet doit l'estre aussi" above, correspond in a sense to the sententiae of Renaissance tragedy. These particular two lines even share the typographical convention of specially inserted guillemets to mark them. In tragedy, the sententiae are put into the mouths of kings and aristocrats, and express with remarkable constancy throughout the century some aspect of the Stoic philosophy supposed to be proper to people of that rank. In comedy, the proverbs and sayings express the wisdom supposed to be proper to the characters of comedy, namely the bourgeois and the serving class immediately behind them. As d'Amboise says, Les Neapolitaines has a large number of them. So has Les contents; curiously, when the play was re-issued as Les desguisez in 1626, the title-page expressly stated that the new edition contained "L'esplication des Proverbes et mots difficiles", as though proverbs as such presented great difficulty. Larivay, too, adapts into a very easy and natural French the Italian proverbs and sayings of his originals; while all the comedies of the earlier generation include them in plenty, as well. Many of the same phrases reappear in play after play, possibly sometimes as direct sources. They are a kind of popular storehouse providing material throughout all the Renaissance. Among the many parallels are:

"faire ses choux gras" in Les esbahis, Les contens and Les desguisez;¹
 "La fortune aide aux amoureux" in Les esbahis reappearing as "Amour
 aide aux hardis" in Les desguisez;² "Mais qui est galleux qu'il se
 frotte" in Les escolliers corresponding to "Vous me grattez ou il me
 demange" in Les corrivaux;³ "qu'il s'en torche la bouche" or some
 variant of the phrase in six plays at least.

The popular kind of imagery is the most frequent in
 the plays, though none of the plays is as deliberately or pointedly
 about the common people as, for instance, Dekker's The Shoemakers'
Holiday. The distribution of different kinds of imagery in a play
 is significant of the author's conception of his subject, and of the
 audience it was intended for. French Renaissance comedies show four
 kinds of imagery: the popular imagery of proverbs and similar
 figures of speech; French history and literature; Petrarchan; and
 classical.⁴ The references to native history and literature are, for

¹ V, iv; IV, v; V, iv (Maudolé: "Ce n'est pas tout un que
 des choux, / Il y aura bien de la grasse").

² III, iii; III, viii.

³ IV, ii; V, iii.

⁴ It would, of course, be impossible to list the images in
 the plays according to the type of the comparé, as Dr. Spector has done
 in his edition of Les contens, pp. xlix-li (religion, the household,
 business, animals, the body, anti-clericalism, anti-feminism, war,
 games); but a list of this kind does not tell us much about the
function of the images.

instance, Rodomont's calling his sword Flamberge in Les contents, or the frequent use of the word patelinage. In this breadth of imagery they differ from other works by the same authors. Grévin's L'Olimpe and Gelodacrye use almost exclusively classical and Petrarchan imagery, but his two plays include a rich store of popular images and turns of phrase.

Those rich forms of imagery, the emblem and device, ~~even~~ find their way into the plays. D'Amboise, we know, was interested in them, translating and commenting on Paradin's book, and writing a Discours ou traicté des devises (Paris, 1620). And in his play — though it dates from many years earlier — the braggart Dom Dieghos has his devises:

Dieghos: Tu me vois bien à ceste heure paisible et aimable, tellement que je te semble un petit ange, ou plustost un petit Cupidonneau; c'est pourquoy je porte en ma devise une abeille, avec ces mots: Frezia y miel, voulant donner à entendre, par la flèche et le miel, que je suis brave guerrier et amoureux tout ensemble; auparavant je portois une autre devise: Ma honra que vida.

Gaster: Proprement.

Dieghos: Je suis bien lors aussi furieux et terrible, de sorte qu'il n'y a si brave qui ne tremble devant moy cent pieds dans le corps. As-tu jamais veu peinct le dieu Mars? ...

Gaster: Qui donc? Celuy qu'on dict le dieu des batailles? N'est-ce pas cestuy-là qui est pourtraict en une medaille que vous portez au bonnet?

Dieghos : C'est luy-mesme; me voyla tout faict.¹

Another developed and frequent pictorial image is the Petrarchan one of the lover as a ship in a storm, seeking a refuge — it is as it were a constant picture, the woodcut to which the play supplies descriptive comment beneath. Here is Augustin in Les Neapolitaines:

Après unelongue tempeste j'avois trouvé la mer
calme et tranquille pour l'esperance que je prins
aux promesses de ceste servante [Beta], et en un
instant le vent furieux de jalousie m'a remis en
tourmente; puis le temps s'est rendu un peu plus
serain, le vent m'a donné en poupe, qui me fait
surgir au port tant désiré ...²

Surprisingly absent is the use of jargon: the jargon of the pedant, of the doctor, or of any such specialised types. Despite their plentiful existence in the Italian models available to Larivey and later playwrights, characters like these hardly appear in French Renaissance comedy. Even Larivey, adaptor though he was, is comparatively sparing in his use of them. Bruno's Il Candelajo uses an extreme pedant, Manfurio, but Turnèbe and d'Amboise do not. The only pedant in the native comedy is Bonarsius in Les ramonneurs. So that although the speech certainly varies

¹ I, iii.

² II, iv.

from character to character, this particular kind of exaggeration is rare. The braggart seems to concentrate within himself all the need for exaggeration in these plays, and even he can hardly be said to use a jargon. Though his boasts may be grotesquely exaggerated, they are still couched in quite normal vocabulary.¹

The kinds of language that I have described change abruptly with Mélite, more abruptly than either character or plot-structure. Les ramonneurs was stylistically entirely in the 16th century tradition, but Mélite begins something quite new for comedy: a style based on the précieux poetic language of the early 17th century, and in drama so far found only in some pastorals and tragi-comedies. The imagery is no longer colourful and down to earth, but abstract. There are no servants to bring their masters down from their fancies: only one nurse, whose entirely different function is that of a confidante. The language and imagery of every Renaissance comedy are related to a social situation and its practical problems; Mélite's language and imagery are related to

¹ Robert Garapon, in his La fantaisie verbale dans le théâtre français, Paris, 1957, ch. III, comes to the similar conclusion that jargon and "fantaisie verbale" are rare in French Renaissance comedy. He sees Le Loyer's Nephelococugie as an exception, where Le Loyer's model Aristophanes has prompted a number of overflowing torrents of words, recalling not only Aristophanes, but the farces of the time.

states of mind. The imagery is that of the salons, subtle but comparatively colourless, with the exception of Eraste's mad scene, in which the imagery of the underworld is developed at great length and with strong effect.

Verse and prose.

The Pléiade comedies significantly used the vehicle of the native French farces, the octosyllable without alternate masculine and feminine rhymes. Apart from the translators Charles Estienne and Jean-Pierre de Mesmes, the first to change this is La Taille, a figure of transition in so many ways. His Les corrivaux is in prose, doubtless following the model of Italy, where so many comedies had already been written thus. Le Negromant is in prose also, although Ariosto's Il Negromante was in verse. Les corrivaux is written in an easy style, always flowing and colloquial, with very few passages in any kind of complex or elevated style. Even the lover's set speech is down to earth:

mais quoy? qui est celuy qui ne connoit les
forces d'amour? qui ne connoit qu'il est aveugle,
jeune et volage, sans loy et sans raison? C'est
par luy que je n'ay non plus de repos que si
j'avois le vif argent sous les pieds. Et pour
ceste cause, je n'ay fait que tracasser par toute
la ville ...¹

¹ I, 11.

Compare Grévin's version of the same topos:

Sera dunque la recompense
De ma longue perseverance
Mise en oubly, et mon service
Recompansé d'une injustice?
C'est maintenant que j'aperçoy
Combien est petite la foy,
Et combien, au double, est traitresse
La faincte voix d'une maistresse.¹

— a lament 54 lines long, compared with La Taille's nine lines of prose before the lover turns to practical measures.

But La Taille is before his time in writing in prose. Baif after him, and Chappuis, still use verse in their plays, and it is a whole new generation, dating exactly from the arrival in France of the Italian players, that turns to prose as a medium for comedy: first the minor figure de Vivre in the late '70's, then Larivey, Turnèbe and d'Amboise. Bruno's Il Candelajo is in prose, Fornaris' Angelica too, and its translation Angelique. Les ramonneurs, though forty years later, shares the same medium, as well as sharing similar characterisation and subject-matter.

Perrin and Godard both return to verse for their plays. Perrin of course is turning back to farce (and to Terence) for his models, and away from the Italians; Godard adapts a play of Ariosto's

¹ Les esbahis, II, 1.

which existed in a version in verse as well as one in prose.¹

Troterel, too, uses verses: the octosyllable for Gillette, and surprisingly alexandrines for Les corrivaux. Corneille turns to the alexandrine, doubtless because of its use in the tragi-comic and pastoral genres that preshadowed his play.

It would be true to say, then, that the farces provided a model for the octosyllabic metre of the Pléiade comedies, and the Italians for the prose of the next generation. But these are historical reasons. Is there any intrinsic merit in one form rather than another, in the octosyllable, the alexandrine, or prose? Renaissance theorists and playwrights said that there was. One suggestion was that the more serious the subject-matter, the longer the line should be. Sebillet writes of the alexandrine:

Cette espece est moins frequente que les autres
deus precedentes [eight- and ten-syllable lines]
et ne se peut proprement appliquer qu'a choses
fort graves, comme aussi au pois de l'aureille
se trouve pesante.²

But this is of course an illusion. The test is an aural one, and in actual delivery the length of line makes very little difference. Gilbert Gadoffre writes in his Ronsard par lui-même about similar

¹ Cf. Ariosto, Opere Minori, vol. II, Florence, 1857.

² L'art poétique françois, ed. Gaiffe, p. 41.

ideas of Paul Laumonier: "On reste confondu devant une telle méconnaissance des structures poétiques". and shows how the shortest lines can have the heaviest effect:

Ceux qui sont sous le resveil
Du soleil
Ceux qui habitent Niphate,
Ceux qui vont d'un boeuf suant
Remuant
Les gras rivages d'Euphrate.¹

Another suggestion was Larivey's, a naturalistic idea before its time: comedy deals with people of comparatively low rank, such people do not speak in an elevate way, therefore comedy should be in prose rather than verse:

Or, si je n'ay voulu en ce peu, contre l'opinion
de beaucoup, obliger la franchise de ma liberté
de parler à la severité de la loy de ces
critiques qui veulent que la Comedie soit un
poème subject au nombre et mesure des vers ...
je l'ay faict [i.e., he has written in prose]
parce qu'il m'a semblé que le commun peuple, qui
est le principal personnage de la scène, ne
s'estudie tant à agencer ses paroles qu'à publier
son affection, qu'il a plutost dicté que pensée.²

The very artificiality of drama, of course — particularly of the

¹ Ronsard par lui-même, Paris, 1960, pp. 85-6. The verse is from Ronsard's Ode au Duc d'Orleans.

² Preface to François d'Amboise, Ancien théâtre français, V, pp. 2-3.

un-naturalistic Renaissance drama -- scotches this idea from the start. And since such things as the coarse jests of the servants fit easily into verse, the theory cannot be justified in practical terms either. However, in the Renaissance context, it is evidently another attempt to achieve decorum, to put the appropriate kind of speech into the mouth of the appropriate kind of person. Shakespeare indeed followed the same principle of decorum in his use of verse and prose: in those tragedies where comic passages appear in the mouth of lower-class characters, those passages are in prose against a background of verse for the rest of the play:

Macbeth: To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

(Knocking within)

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou could'st!

(Enter a Porter. Knocking within)

Porter: Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. (Knocking.) Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub?

Effective though this may be, it is of course not essential to the theatre: Jonson's Alchemist is entirely in verse, from the complex rhetoric of Sir Epicure Mammon to the rapid exchanges and curses of the arrival of the officers in act V.

Nevertheless, these theories, combined with the examples of the various models, probably in fact determined the comic practice in France. One may wonder only why the universally admired model,

Terence, with his hexameters, was not imitated in this respect from the very beginning.

Monologues and asides

The monologues and asides in these plays, like the prologues and epilogues, provide a relationship with the audience. They may be compared with the chorus in tragedy, which inherited from the Greeks and Seneca the function of representing, to some extent, the audience's or the common people's point of view. The chorus, composed of non-aristocrats, commenting on an action over which they had little or no power, provided a link between the characters in the play and the audience. A further link existed in the soliloquy. Both, however, remained on the further side of the boundary of illusion: in tragedy, neither chorus nor soliloquy would contain any direct allusion to the audience, or address it as "vous". Sédécie in Les Juifves may address Jehovah, but not the audience.

In comedy, monologues and asides have a comparable but more direct function. The aside, rare in tragedy, is common in the comedies, and by its very nature is a direct confidence made to the audience unheard by the other characters. The soliloquy in tragedy by its nature admits the audience's presence, but particularly the aside in comedy makes positive use of it, sometimes addressing it directly.

Asides and monologues in, say, 19th century melodrama, are used to stir the audience's emotions; here the appeal is rather intellectual than emotional, but the procedure is the same.

In Les esbahis, Grévin uses nineteen monologues and fifteen asides or groups of asides — a large number for a not particularly long play. Some are used for exposition, but not tiresomely so. Only once does a speaker ever speak directly to the audience (Julien in II, iii: "Vous le [Panthaleone] verrez tantost vanter, / Tantost elever ses beaux faiots") but there are questions and phrases such as "Pensez que ..." which are what we call rhetorical. They are most remarkable for their quantity. There is not a single dialogue which is not flanked or interrupted by a monologue or an aside. A typical grouping is a monologue, followed by an aside, followed by a dialogue, thus:

Le Gentilhomme: (monologue:)

... Il faut sçavoir donner le tour
A chacun: Et dieu sçait comment
Ell' font espargne de serment,
Pour mieux paslier leur deffaicte.

(Aside:)

Mais voicy venir ma tendrette:
Je oroy qu'ell' est bien assurée,
A la voir tant délibérée;
Il la fault avoir à la chaulde.

Claude: Dieu vous gard, Monsieur.

Le Gentilhomme: Dieu gard, Claude.¹

¹ Les esbahis, III, ii.

Many different combinations are possible; for instance, in the same play III, v begins with a monologue by Gerard, followed by a dialogue aside between Julien and Marion. The important point is that both monologue and asides are accepted as a more normal part of the dramatic structure than they generally are today.

Les contens and Les Neapolitaines have typical groupings of the same kind, but in these plays it is more frequent to have a monologue followed by dialogue, without the aside. Les contens as a whole includes only four asides or groups of them. Typically, a dialogue will not begin or end without being ushered in or out by a monologue, thus:

Rodomont: Hé, mes amis, ayez pitié de moy!

Sergent: Nous ne pouvons. C'est trop pressché! Sus, sus, menons-le dessous les bras comme une mariée!

Rodomont: Ha, Dieu, que je suis miserable! Au lieu d'aller flancer ma maistresse, l'on me fait espouser une prison!

Basile: (who, unobserved, has seen Rodomont carried off)
J'ay eu du plaisir pour plus de dix mille francs de voir ce fendeur de naseaux si empesché au millieu de ces sergens ...¹

In Les Neapolitaines, Gaster has six monologues and takes part in six dialogues; Loys five of each.

¹ Les contens, III, ii - iii.

The fondness for asides and monologues is part of a whole style of acting in the Renaissance: an exaggerated style in which this easily over-acted piece of dramatic convention is not out of place. In theory, they can be effective by their rarity. But in these comedies, they are so frequent that they must be accepted as part of a full convention: not a sudden effective exception, but part of the essence of the play.

The monologues fall into recognisable patterns, by their form and by their subject. Formally, they stand at focal points of the plot: at the beginning of acts or at points of tension or realisation. Thus in Les contents again, Thomas' monologue about his determination to make Rodomont pay begins act III. And Eustache's monologue about his detachment from Genevieve is structurally important because it leaves the way clear for Basile. Their subjects are regularly the same: to the lover's lament we may add the young girl's lament, the valet's cynical comments, and so on.

The asides represent one of the most exaggerated conventions of these plays. They imply, of course, that the character speaking is not heard by the others, and often indeed not even seen. Sometimes this leads to flat improbability. Here is the third scene of the third act of Les corrivaux, in which four short monologues are followed by three asides:

Claude: Puis que je ne voy plus personne en la rue il est temps de faire le signe que j'ai promis à Filadelfe.

Alizon: Puis que Claude et Fremin s'en sont allez, it faut que j'aïlle bailler l'assignation à Euvertre.

Claude: J'ay desja ouvert l'huis de derriere par où ils doyvent entrer.

Alizon: Je vien tout à point de trouver nostre huys de derriere deverouillé par je ne seay qui.

Claude: Qu'est-ce que j'oy parler derriere moy? Hè c'est Alizon, ceste vieille diablesse. Que le diable face maintenant une anatomie de sa cervelle: elle me gastera tout.

Alizon: Ne voye-je pas là Claude? Hè bon gré en ait ma vie, il me destourbera.

Claude: Si faut-il trouver façon de m'en depestrer vistement. Vien ça, que fais-tu icy?

A print in the *Recueil Fossard*, and an odd painting copied from it (cf. fig. 10 below) show an overhearing scene in action: "Il capitain Cocodrillo" (i.e., Fabrizio de Formaris) is shown bent double listening to a conversation, without any scenery or "props" to hide him.¹ The artificial convention implies an exaggerated kind of acting,

¹ Turnèbe, anxious as ever to minimise the artificiality of his play, provides a cart (or an "auvent") for Rodomont to hide behind in I, iv, but this is quite exceptional and the matter is normally left to the actors, to improvise with perhaps a "ruelle" between two compartments.

associated today more with melodrama than with comedy.

The patterns of delivery, then, fall naturally into a small number of recognised kinds: prologues and epilogues, monologues, asides — and, of course, normal dialogue. They are, of course, a convention. But there is more variety and less stiffness in their use, particularly in their many combinations, than there is in the corresponding conventions of French Renaissance tragedy: the opening monologues, the choruses, the stichomythia, the numbers of sententiae. Tragedy achieves a certain formality with them, but too often at the expense of stiffness, a fault which can seldom be laid at the door of the comic writers.

CONCLUSION

The comedies of Jodelle, Grévin, Belleau and La Taille are of a kind, sharing certain features of construction in such a way that they are unique in the history of comedy. All written by students of the University of Paris within some ten years, they have a family likeness. They blend the subject-matter of the native genres with the forms of classical comedy in a way which is not found in any other literature. Moral indignation is absent, so is profound characterisation, but the peculiar blend that they have adopted gives them a liveliness that amply compensates. They are successful entertainment.

The later plays too are successful entertainment. But from Larivey onwards the Italian comedies are taken as a new model, and more wholeheartedly, so that the peculiarly French characteristics of Les contans or Les Neapolitaines are fewer, found in varieties of speech and imagery rather than in characters or plot. Les racontours, as late as about 1624, is much more French in every way: in its lively style, its references to Paris where it takes place, its French characters, its use of French farce-actors -- and it is regrettable that so lively a play should have been (as far as we know) the last of its kind, supplanted only

some five years later by the new comic style of Cornaille.

The décor for the plays seems to remain constant throughout the Renaissance, with some elaborations -- but not basic changes -- around the late 1570's. It consists, without exception, of a central area supposed to be a city street, flanked by a number of town houses provided with doors and windows and some of whose interiors are praticable. The internal evidence of the plays remains constant, and is supported by a certain amount of external, mostly pictorial evidence: the farces show a primitive neutral area; Serlio's "comic scene" shows a décor of the kind needed (though more elaborate); the Italians vary but in general support the pattern; while Molière, in a décor such as that for Rotrou's Les Menechmes, corresponds entirely.

I have written at length about the conventions of the plays. These conventions, of plot-structure, of character, and of speech, remain generally constant through eighty years, despite the important arrival of the Italians and their adoption as models, and despite the forty-year gap between Les Neapolitaines and Les ramonneurs. Troterel and Godard, within that gap, show that the same conventions continued to be accepted. They are, of course, a means of relationship between author and audience: in

practice they mean that an author will use the technique of variation upon a norm. Braggarts and valets are two accepted kinds of character: to mix the two, as Godard does in Les desguisez, is to create a new effect. Another form of relationship with the audience is dramatic irony: when, for instance, Messire Jean tells us that Eugène is growing careless and will find himself in trouble — and the trouble then in fact arrives.

The constant recurrence of conventions of course obstructs our idea of originality, but that idea is irrelevant. My aim here has been to discover precisely what conventions were used, and to emphasize above all the way in which variations upon them were carried out: to point out not uniformity, but variety, which is the essence of the plays. The principle of variation has been well stated by Roland Barthes:

Structuralement, le sens ne naît point par répétition mais par différence, en sorte qu'un terme rare, des lors qu'il est saisi dans un système d'exclusions et de relations, signifie tout autant qu'un terme fréquent ... À partir de combien de tragédies aurais-je le droit de "généraliser" une situation racinienne? Cinq, six, dix?¹

¹ Critique et vérité, Paris, 1966, pp. 66-7.

Comedy in the French Renaissance is in one way a self-conscious genre: in that the elements of its speeches show a constant, and unusual, awareness of the audience. Prologues and epilogues lead the audience into and out of the play. Throughout the action, asides and monologues remind them that they are at the play. We find this self-consciousness less often in tragedy; in English Renaissance comedy; in Molière; or in modern comedy. Yet in another way, the French Renaissance genre stands aside from the audience, giving them comparatively few of the topical references that can be most effective in comedy. Comparatively few, that is, compared with the farces and related genres, for instance the Franc archer de Bagnolet, which satirises the corps created by Charles VII in 1448. The comic world is a separate one.¹ In a more general way, we may ask whether the comedies are particularly relevant to their times, as many of the tragedies were claimed to be (Garnier said that his Porcie was "propre pour y voir despeinctes

¹ A change may have occurred about the mid-century. On 4 December 1550 Sir John Masone reported from Blois that proclamations had been issued to restrain freedom of speech touching the French king and the Council, and wished that there were a similar restriction in England. "They were wont in their farces to spare no man; but now they are bridled for that point" (Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, 1547-1553, p. 63; quoted from Frances Yates, Contribution to the study of the French social drama in the sixteenth century, unpublished thesis for the degree of M.A., London, 1926, p. 7.)

les calamitez de ce temps"): probably they are only incidentally so, as when Belleau refers to the sieges of Le Havre or Poitiers. Social criticism is rare, found in only a few characters and situations like Jodelle's hedonist churchman or Belleau's dissatisfied men of law. The principal aim of French Renaissance comedy was not moral teaching of any kind, but delight.

Appendix A : synopsis of the plays.

Jodelle: L'Eugène.

I. Eugène (an abbé) and Messire Jean (his chaplain) discuss the luxury of a churchman's life. Eugène has married Alix off to Guillaume, le bon lourdaud, but is now worried lest Guillaume should realise why: namely, that Eugène might the more easily enjoy her favours. — Messire Jean, alone, reveals himself as Eugène's parasite, and confirms that Eugène is growing careless. — Guillaume and Alix display their respective simplicity and easy morals.

II. Florimond has returned to Paris from the wars; he is an old flame of Alix, and is anxious to renew the relationship. He and his follower Arnault discuss Paris, the wars, and learning, before Arnault goes off to find Alix. — Hélène, Eugène's sister, alone: she had herself been fond of Florimond, but he had been discouraged by her lack of apparent response. She tells Eugène of Florimond's arrival; he is, rightly, apprehensive.

III. Arnault returns with the news that Alix is married, and why. Florimond is furious; he has some furniture in Alix' house, and decides he will at least first reclaim this. — Messire Jean recovers from the tumultuous arrival of Arnault in Alix' house, which he reports to Eugène and Hélène. No solution occurs. — Florimond beats Alix, and with Arnault oversees the removal of his furniture.

IV. Guillaume, puzzled by the whole thing, goes to see Eugène. Matthieu, Guillaume's creditor, arrives and demands payment. They all, with Hélène, go into Eugène's house to discuss the matter. — Florimond decides to kill Eugène. Eugène realises the danger and all the problems and retires alone to think.

V. Eugène has thought of the solutions. Hélène shall be reconciled with Florimond, and Matthieu is to be offered a benefice for one of his sons. Both of these are carried out, and Guillaume is content to share Alix with Eugène.

Grévin: La tresorière.

I. Loys (a gentleman) discusses with Richard (his valet) the progress of his love for Constante, wife of the Tresorier, a Government official. The Tresorier's impending absence may result in some success. Richard marvels at his master's folly in loving so inconstant a woman. — Richard on his master's behalf offers the Tresorier interest to obtain payment of a sum owed. — Marie, Constante's chambermaid, is overheard by Richard as she reflects that Loys takes second place to the Protenotaire in her mistress' affections.

II. The Protenotaire (probably a legal official¹) discusses with Boniface (his valet) the progress of his love for Constante. The Protenotaire is short of money; Boniface promises to use his ingenuity to obtain some. — Boniface overhears Constante promising Richard a rendezvous for Loys; and then succeeds in borrowing 150 escus from Constante herself. — The Tresorier tries to borrow money from Sulpice. — Marie promises herself the pleasure of returning Boniface's advances.

III. Loys reflects on the profit motive for human actions, and on Constante. Richard informs him that the Tresorier will produce the money; then attempts, unsuccessfully, to seduce Marie. Constante scolds her for chattering to Richard, then herself reflects, strangely, on the inconstancy of men. — The Protenotaire appears, and Constante lets him into the house — but Richard sees this and vows that his master shall have vengeance.

IV. Richard has told Loys what he has seen. Loys reflects bitterly, and interrogates Richard to be sure. — The Tresorier and Sulpice arrive; they and Loys and Richard and an extra supporter Thomas all try to enter the house and in the end break the door down. — Marie emerges and reports that the Protenotaire was caught in flagrante delicto; then Boniface, who had escaped by flight, joins her.

V. Sulpice and the Tresorier attempt to calm Loys and to prevent him from making the affair public; Loys agrees on condition that he receives the money back that he has given to Constante, and that the two quarters' money paid him by the Tresorier shall be null and void. — The Protenotaire and Boniface decide to keep the money lent them by Constante. — Marie also is content, and plans more amours.

¹ Cf. Grévin, Théâtre complet, ed. L. Pinvert, Paris, 1922, p. 354.

Grévin: Les Esbahis.

I. Josse alone: his wife Agnès left him three years ago for a lover, taking his money, and it seems that she has died. He is now engaged to Madelon, Gerard's daughter. Marion, lavandière, determines to prevent him; for although he claims to be vigorous enough for love, he wears a fur coat, has catarrh, a cold and a cough. Antoine, his servant, allies himself with Marion.

II. L'Advocat, in love with Madelon, laments her engagement to Josse. He rejects his cousin the Gentilhomme's advice to turn to other women. With Julien his servant and the Gentilhomme, he plans to try to secure Madelon for himself. Panthaleone, yet another suitor, makes a brief appearance serenading her. Marion plans to borrow Josse's clothes from Antoine for L'Advocat so that he may easily enter Gerard's house. Madelon laments.

III. Claude, madquerelle: the trade is not what it was. She has Agnès in her house, and promises her to the Gentilhomme. L'Advocat, disguised as Josse, goes into Gerard's house; but immediately Gerard appears.

IV. L'Advocat emerges, full of joy at his success, and avoids Gerard (who had seen him through the keyhole without penetrating the disguise). Josse prepares to go to Madelon; Antoine returns with the clothes only just in time. He sets out; Gerard taxes him with his amorous exploits, which he indignantly denies, from which Gerard concludes that he now wishes to repudiate Madelon. Madelon fears for the future, and Marion consoles her. L'Advocat tells his cousin of his success; Julien goes off to find similar game.

V. Panthaleone is serenading again, until Julien interrupts. Josse arrives to fight Gerard, but Julien puts all the blame for the seduction on Panthaleone. Agnès arrives with the Gentilhomme; Josse recognises her, while Panthaleone also has a claim on her, having kept her in Lyon for three years. Josse is forced to take her back, Panthaleone is chased off, while a marriage between L'Advocat and Madelon will be arranged.

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Belleau: La Reconnaissance.

I. Janne the maid, then Maistre Jehan the clerk, complain of their hard work and of the household. Madame appears; her sourness justifies some at least of their complaints. We learn that Monsieur, her husband, is courting Antoinette, a ward in their house, who, however, has an affection for a captain. Antoinette laments. Maistre Jehan, who had gone to the palais de justice, returns and inveighs against it.

II. L'Amoureux, an advocate like Monsieur, delivers a monologue on the torments of love. Potiron, his valet, arrives; we learn that Monsieur for his own ends is planning to marry Antoinette off to Maistre Jehan. Potiron and Janne tell Maistre Jehan of this.

III. Monsieur praises the virtues of Love and laments his own wife's sourness. He tries to appease her; tells her that the captain is dead; and attempts to persuade her of the virtues of his plan — which L'Amoureux, Potiron and Janne plan to thwart.

IV. Antoinette laments the captain's death and tries to reconcile herself to the idea of Maistre Jehan as a husband. Janne is ordered to buy food for the engagement dinner that evening. Madame and her neighbour discuss the proposed marriage. Monsieur hopes all will go off without mishap. L'Amoureux on Love; Potiron tells him that the captain is dead.

V. The captain arrives with his valet Bernard, and they go into the house. Janne reports. Then the Gentilhomme de Poiitou also arrives and goes in. Maistre Jehan comes out, then L'Amoureux; we learn that the Gentilhomme de Poiitou is Antoinette's father, that a marriage has been arranged between Antoinette and L'Amoureux, that Monsieur is consequently thwarted, that L'Amoureux has been given a post as conseiller and the captain an option on a spare niece.

La Taille: Les Corrivaux.

I. Restitue confides her woes to her nurse: not only is she pregnant by Filadelfe, but Filadelfe has transferred his affections to Fleurdelys. The nurse, taking a practical view, suggests that she try to go to the country to dispose of the child. — Filadelfe, waiting for news from Claude, a servant in Fleurdelys' house, justifies his infidelity by the irresistible power of love. Claude arrives; he has arranged for Filadelfe to enter the house within the hour, and he will signal with a torch when the time comes. Gillet, Filadelfe's valet, declares himself to be more down to earth than "ces amoureux transis". Filadelfe gives instructions for the coming adventure.

II. Euvertre, too, is planning an entry into Fleurdelys' house. Alizon, the other servant, arranges to signal to him with a distaff when the time comes. Her master Fremin, on his way to town on important business, urges her to take care of Fleurdelys. His own relationship with Alizon seems equivocal.

III. Jaqueline, Restitue's mother, agrees to let her go to the country, as she is unwell, but has meanwhile summoned a doctor. Claude and Alizon both appear at the same spot at the same moment to give their respective signals; they squabble, and Claude leaves. But now there are noises off in Fleurdelys' house, and the doctor has given the game away in Restitue's. Enter Gillet, then Felippes (Euvertre's father's servant), from whom we learn that the two young men both entered Fleurdelys' house, that there was fighting, and that the sergeants of the watch arrived and carried them and Claude off to prison.

IV. Benard, Filadelfe's father, arrives from Metz with his glutton valet Felix. Jaqueline heaps reproaches on him for his son's behaviour, and his son's attempt on Fleurdelys' honour is also revealed. Fremin and Benard meet; we learn that Fleurdelys is in fact Benard's daughter, lost at the siege of Metz ten years ago and taken in by Fremin.

V. Enter Gerard, Euvertre's father; with the two other men (Fremin and Benard) a solution is worked out: Euvertre shall marry Fleurdelys, and Filadelfe Restitue. They go off with Philandre, the master of the watch. The three valets, by now drunk, provide some light relief. After some frightening of the young men with the prospect of the law, the solutions are agreed and, moreover, Benard will marry Jaqueline.

Larivey: Les Esprits.

I. Severin's brother Hilaire, since he and Elizabeth his wife are childless, have brought up Fortuné, one of Severin's sons. Because of Severin's miserliness, his daughter Laurence cannot find a match, nor has Urbain his other son the allowance a young man should have. — Fortuné and his servant Frontin: Fortuné is in love with Apoline, a girl who is in a convent, though she has not made her profession. — Ruffin, maquereau, promises Urbain his Feliciane, on payment of ten écus. — Frontin can give Fortuné no good news of his Apoline. Meanwhile Ruffin has brought Feliciane.

II. Desiré is in love with Laurence; Frontin can offer him no good news either. Severin arrives; Frontin, to prevent his going in and discovering Urbain and Feliciane, persuades him that the house is full of ghosts. Severin goes off, first hiding his purse (with 2,000 écus in it) as he does not wish to carry it around. Desiré, who was hidden, sees him and takes the écus, putting pebbles in their place. Severin returns with Frontin, who promises to find a sorcerer to exorcise the ghosts; Severin checks that the purse is still in its hiding place.

III. M. Josse the sorcerer, bribed by Frontin, conjures the ghosts: Frontin pretending to be one of them takes the ring from the blindfolded Severin's finger as a sign that they have left the house. Feliciane and Urbain go into Hilaire's house which is close by. Severin sends M. Josse away; Ruffin almost gives the plot away to Severin, but is prevented by Frontin. Severin discovers the theft of the coins.

IV. Hilaire tries to dissuade Fortuné from his affair with Apoline. Fortuné tells Hilaire of Feliciane's honourable parentage; and sends Pasquette, servante, to get news of Apoline. Gerard, Feliciane's father, arrives in town. Pasquette gives away to Hilaire the fact that Apoline has had a child.

V. Gerard has heard the news of Feliciane, but Ruffin assures him that a marriage with Urbain may be possible. They go to see Severin, who is interested in nothing but his purse; and then look for Feliciane at Hilaire's house. — Hilaire has been to the convent and arranged a marriage between Fortuné and Apoline. Meanwhile, also by Hilaire's intervention, the marriages between Urbain and Feliciane and Desiré and Laurence need only Severin's consent. The purse is produced, financial arrangements made that satisfy Severin, and the marriages settled.

I. Louise and her daughter Geneviève, are on their way to church, very early in order to avoid Basile and Rodomont, who in Louise's eyes are both unwelcome suitors for Geneviève. Nivelet, Rodomont's lackey, sees them go by, then Rodomont arrives. They overhear Basile, with his servant Antoine, planning to enter Geneviève's house disguised as Eustache. Basile persuades Françoise, vieille femme, to try to win Geneviève over to the idea and fix a definite time — which she does. Nivelet plans to see that his master seizes this chance to enter the house disguised as Eustache before Basile does.

II. Girard wishes to arrange the engagement of his son Eustache to Geneviève, but Eustache is reluctant because he knows that she favours Basile. Françoise succeeds in putting him off still further. Rodomont borrows a scarlet costume from him, identical to the one which Basile has already borrowed from him. Françoise tells Basile what she has done.

III. Rodomont, disguised, is seized by three sergents for debt to Thomas, a merchant, before he has a chance to enter Geneviève's house. Basile, also disguised, sees him hauled off. Saucisson, macquarou, bringing Alix for Eustache's pleasure, briefly mistakes Basile for Eustache. Basile goes in, leaving Antoine outside, who too late sees Louise returning home early. She goes in, looks through the keyhole, takes Basile for Eustache, locks them in, and goes off to look for Gerard). Meanwhile, Antoine, with Perrette, Geneviève's maid, gets Basile out of the locked room through a window.

IV. Basile fetches Alix and puts her in his place in the borrowed costume to deceive Louise; on the way they pass Thomas (who is in fact Alix' husband. Rodomont has been freed. He is still dressed as Eustache (and is briefly taken for him by Gerard) but decides it is too late to try to enter Geneviève's house. Louise taxes Gerard with his son's supposed attack on Geneviève's honour; but Eustache explains to him that it was Basile. Eventually Louise unlocks the door, but finds only Alix with her daughter.

V. Françoise reports to Basile that Louise's latest idea is to marry her daughter to Rodomont. Geneviève at her window, and Basile below, exchange declarations of love. Rodomont, hearing that Basile has had Geneviève's virginity, consequently refuses her hand when it is offered to him. Louise realises the truth, gives in and consents to the marriage of Basile and Geneviève.

I. Augustin is in love with the widow Angélique. He talks to Beta, her servant, who he hopes will help him to her favours. — Dom Dieghos, a Spanish braggart in exile from Naples, is in love with her too; in which Gaster, a parasite, encourages him. Gaster, alone, on his profession of parasite.

II. Gaster, too, attempts to employ Beta, for his master; she plays for time, giving him a promise for tomorrow. Augustin overhears, but she placates him with the promise of an immediate rendezvous. — Ambroise, Augustin's father, disapproves of the affair with the widow; though he fails to get definite confirmation of it out of Loys, his son's servant, he nevertheless decides to cut his son's allowance to the bare minimum. — Augustin is overjoyed at success with Angélique. To counter his father's decision, Loys suggests he turn to his friend Camille for money, and also for help if necessary against Dieghos.

III. Camille agrees, and they plan to go to Angélique's after lunch. Dieghos, rejected, goes off with Gaster to lunch. In the afternoon, Augustin and Camille arrive at Angélique's first; but Angélique is forced to invent a story for getting them out of the house when Dieghos and Gaster arrive too. She also succeeds in putting off Dieghos and Gaster until the next day. Virginie, her supposed daughter, laments: her father lost all his possessions through participating in the rebellion at Naples, and has died in Paris leaving her alone with Angélique, who is not in fact her mother. Meanwhile, Camille has fallen in love with Virginie, and plans how he may win her.

IV. Corneille, Virginie's servant, laments to Augustin and Angélique; Camille has succeeded in making his way into the house and seducing Virginie. Augustin suggests they try to persuade him to marry her, and goes off to find him. Meanwhile Loys has found his own pleasures.

V. Marc-Aurel, a jeweller from Naples, admires Paris. Meeting Camille, he is able to tell him what Virginie's family is, and moreover that by coincidence Camille has become heir to the lost fortunes of that family. Camille decides he will marry her, and with Augustin goes off to see her. Loys follows with Marc-Aurel. Dieghos is furious — until Louppes, a messenger, tells him that he is free to return to Naples, where a marriage has been arranged for him. Gaster decides he must look for a new vache à lait; a marriage will be arranged between Virginie and Camille; and Beta and Gaster go off to the engagement banquet.

I. Maclou has heard that his son Sobrin instead of studying is spending time and money on a love-affair, and tries unsuccessfully to obtain the truth from his son's valet Finet. — Grassette, talking to her servant Babilie, reveals that she is not interested in Sobrin, but in the less wealthy Corbon. — Friquet, a neighbour, reveals to Marin that his daughter Grassette is entertaining lovers.

II. Sobrin, against Friquet's advice, declares that he will pursue his love for Grassette. Finet, on his behalf, begins to win Babilie over. — Corbon declares that he prefers learning, which can raise his social status, to amorous pursuits. — Maclou warns his son that he will not support him if he does not concentrate on his studies.

III. Babilie speaks for Sobrin to Grassette, but without success; this she reports to Finet. Finet reports it to Sobrin, who is still determined; Finet promises to think again. — Marin suspects Babilie of aiding her mistress' amours. — Finet meets Corbon and begins to plan in that direction.

IV. It is agreed between Sobrin, Corbon and Finet that a rendezvous shall be arranged between Corbon and Grassette, but that it shall be Sobrin, disguised and at night, who shall keep it. In return, Corbon is to have the benefice that Sobrin controls. — Finet arranges the rendezvous with Babilie. — Sobrin, disguised as a peasant and speaking in dialect, is admitted by Marin to the cellar. — Corbon expresses his pleasure. Sobrin emerges and recounts his success to Finet. — Friquet and Marin have discovered what has happened, and Maclou too learns it from Marin.

V. Sobrin and Finet gain Friquet to their side by threats and promises, and he persuades both Marin and Maclou to favour the marriage of Sobrin and Grassette. He reports this to Sobrin; and the marriage is arranged.

Godard: Les Desguisez.

I. Gregoire laments: his wife has died, his household expenses are rising, while Prouventard is demanding a sum of money that Gregoire holds in trust for him. — Olivier alone, then with Maudolé, his servant: he is in love with Louyse, Gregoire's daughter.

II. Prouventard boasts to his lackey Vadupié of his military exploits, and that he will soon recover the money. — Gregoire decides to offer him Louyse's hand instead of the money; he tells Louyse, then makes the offer — but Prouventard indignantly refuses it. — Maudolé discovers that Gregoire needs a new valet, and suggests that Olivier take the job.

III. Olivier and Maudolé exchange clothes. Olivier offers his services to Gregoire and is accepted. Maudolé brags in Olivier's clothes; Prouventard at first is terrified, but discovering he is merely a valet, with Vadupié's aid chases him off. — Nicole, Louyse's servant, advises her that Prouventard would be a poor match; meanwhile Olivier is making a good impression. Maudolé in vain demands his clothes back. Olivier on Love. He declares himself to Louyse, who however registers only alarm.

IV. On Nicole's suggestion, Louyse now encourages Olivier. — Gregoire sends Olivier to Prouventard, but Olivier suggests as a better match than Prouventard a rich young man whom he knows. Maudolé, impersonating Olivier, is to be that rich young man, a scheme which Louyse approves. Maudolé carries out his part, but makes the slip of promising to fetch his father, Pierre Galland, who does not in fact live in the town. Olivier and Maudolé, by blackmailing Passetrouvant, a passer-by, with attempted robbery, persuade him to impersonate Pierre Galland; this he successfully does.

V. Pierre Galland himself appears unexpectedly in town, and by coincidence meets Gregoire. Passetrouvant still maintains himself to be Pierre Galland, and tempers rise. Maudolé appears, still impersonating Olivier. The confusion increases, then is gradually cleared as Maudolé reveals the truth. The marriage of Olivier and Louyse is eventually agreed, Prouventard is given an option on a spare sister of Olivier, and an engagement dinner is prepared.

Anon (Hardy?): Les ramoneurs.

I. Le Capitaine Scanderbec boasts to his valet Galaffre; and instructs his sister Diane to stay quietly at home and see no one. — Philippes discusses with his valet Martin his love for Diane; then talks to the pedant Bonarsius; Martin wins to their side the fruit-seller Dame Bonne, who begins to win Diane over. The Captain returns. Philippes serenades Diane, but the Captain appears, and Philippes is forced to leave.

II. Madelon (courtisane) discusses with Dame Claude (macquerelle) the possibility of marrying the Captain. Negotiations are begun. — Philippes and Martin again turn to Dame Bonne, who takes a letter to Diane; but the Captain again interrupts, even though Philippes succeeds in chasing him into the house. Diane gives Martin a note for his master.

III. The Captain gives orders that the house is to be cleaned; Diane is to engage some chimney-sweeps. These are Philippes and Martin, who send Galaffre to fetch more wine and carry off Diane disguised as a sweep to Claude's house. The Captain returns to find her gone. Bonarsius, hidden, has seen them.

IV. Maistre Nicolas, Madelon's father, has arrived in Paris. — Bonarsius bribes Claude to smuggle him into Diane's room that night; but Martin overhears the arrangement. — The Captain is determined to recover Diane. Madelon is in the hands of justice for debt; she goes off with the Captain and the sergents. — Martin, unknown to Claude, has set a prostitute in Diane's place, and Claude as agreed lets in Bonarsius. Martin's and Philippes' student friends, disguised as the watch, surprise him there, but for the promise of twelve escus let him go.

V. The Captain and Madelon are free and searching for Diane and Philippes. — The Captain's rich uncle Dubuisson has met Madelon's father Maistre Nicolas. — Claude gives Galaffre the word to follow Martin, thus setting the Captain on Diane's track. — Dubuisson and M. Nicolas find Madelon, who has by now married the Captain. — The Captain has found Philippes and Diane; eventually both the marriages are approved.

Cornelle: Mélite.

I. Eraste declares to his friend Tirsis his love for Mélite. Tirsis is sceptical about marriage, declaring that if he marries, it will be for financial advantage. Eraste, to change his friend's opinion, introduces him to Mélite — and succeeds only too well. — Tirsis finds his sister Cloris with her lover Philandre, and hints at his new love.

II. Eraste regrets that he ever introduced Tirsis to Mélite, the more so since Mélite herself now shows signs of her growing affection; and vows to take action. — Tirsis reads to his sister a sonnet in praise of Mélite which he has written, ostensibly for Eraste. Cloris sees the truth and encourages him. — Eraste has written a false love letter, ostensibly from Mélite to Philandre, who however refuses to leave his Cloris, despite Eraste's encouragement. — Mélite indicates to Tirsis that she returns his love, and Tirsis gives her the sonnet.

III. The vain Philandre, flattered at Mélite's supposed affection for him, prepares to return it. He shows Tirsis two further false letters, these also supposedly from Mélite to Philandre. Tirsis, alone, laments. He shows the letters to Cloris, who tries to console him by pointing out Mélite's inconstant character; and herself determines to leave the inconstant Philandre. She shows Philandre that she has the letters, and says that she intends to show them to Mélite as a proof of Philandre's indiscretion.

IV. Mélite's nurse tries to persuade her to encourage the rich Eraste rather than Tirsis. — Cloris shows Mélite the letters, but she denounces them as forgeries. Lisis (a friend of Tirsis) announces Tirsis' death, at which Mélite immediately faints. — Eraste, rejoicing at Tirsis' death, hears that Mélite is dead also, and falls into a fit of madness, imagining that he too is dead. — Philandre, in search of his rival Tirsis, hears of his and Mélite's death, and of the falsity of the letters, from the mad Eraste. — Lisis reveals that his announcement was false, designed to test Mélite's affections.

V. Mélite's nurse brings Eraste back to sanity. — Philandre tries, and fails, to obtain Cloris' pardon. Tirsis and Mélite, now together, consider her excessively hard. Eraste confesses and is pardoned; and an attachment between him and Cloris is begun. The nurse speaks a closing monologue.

Appendix B: Grévin's La Maubertine.

La Maubertine is possibly a third comedy by Grévin. Pinvert supposed it to be identical with La tresorière (Grévin, Théâtre complet, Paris, 1922, pp. 353-4; Jacques Grévin, Paris, 1899, pp. 172-3); M. Lebègue considers that it is probably rather a separate play (Tableau ..., p. 305). The evidence is as follows.

Grévin tells us that he wrote a comedy called La Maubertine, referring (in the preface Au lecteur to Les esbahis and La tresorière) to:

ceux qui ont veu la Maubertine première Comédie
que je mis en jeu, et que j'avoye bien délibéré
te donner, si elle ne n'eust esté desrobée.

It is certainly possible that this was in fact an earlier version of La tresorière, especially as the action of La tresorière takes place "non loing de la place Maubert" (La tresorière, prologue).

It is true, also, that La tresorière was first written for a performance in January 1559 and not performed until February 1559, so that a remaniement in between is quite conceivable: a heading to the play reads:

Ceste comedie fut faicte par le commandement du
roi Henry II pour servir aux nopces de madame
Claude, duchesse de Lorraine, mais pour quelques
empeschemens différée; et depuis mise en jeu à
Paris au collège de Beauvais ... le v de fevrier
MDLVIII.

It seems, too, that a complaint, perhaps the cause of such a

remaniement, had been lodged by some ladies of the Maubert quarter:

... ceste plaincte, qui fut faicte
N'aguère encontre le Poëte,
Pour la rancune et le soucy
Des dames de ce quartier cy.

(Les esbahis, prologue)

These are the arguments in favour of identifying La Maubertine with La tresorière. But they are none of them conclusive: for instance, the Maubert quarter was a student quarter, so that two plays could quite naturally be set there. And they are outweighed by one argument: that the one reference to La Maubertine occurs in the preface to both La tresorière and Les esbahis, exactly as though it were in fact a third play. Grévin specifically says there that he is not publishing La Maubertine: "que j'avoie bien délibéré de donner, si elle ne m'eust esté desrobée." If La tresorière and La Maubertine were identical, or even different versions of the same play, this would not make good sense. It is more likely, therefore, that La Maubertine was a third comedy by Grevin.

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——, Trois comedies des six dernieres de Pierre de Larivey Champenois. A l'imitation des anciens [sic] Grecs, Latins et Modernes Italiens. A Sçavoir : La Constance. Le Fidelle. Et les Tromperies. Troyes, Pierre Chevillot, 1611. No privilege (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal). Also exists with a different title-page: Trois nouvelles comedies de Pierre de Larivey, Champenois. A l'imitation des anciens Grecs, Latins, et modernes Italiens. A sçavoir La Constance, Le Fidelle, et Les Tromperies. Imprimé à Troyes, Et se vendent à Paris. Chez La veufve Jean du Brayet, Jean de Bordeaux, et Claude de Roddes. 1611.

——, Les esprits. A copy of Les esprits, bound separately, and foliated 111-165v, probably from the 1579 edition, is in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. Conversely, the British Museum copy of the 1579 edition lacks Les esprits; it may even be that the Arsenal copy is the missing section. - A copy of Les esprits, bound separately, and paginated 209-312, from the 1601 edition, is in the British Museum.

Lasphrise, le capitaine : see Papillon.

La Taille, Jean de, La Famine, ou les Gabeonites ... Ensemble plusieurs autres Ouvres poetiques de Jehan de la Taille de Bondaroy ... et de feu Jaques de la Taille son frere ... Paris, Federic Morel, 1573¹ (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal). On the reverse of the title-page, in the list of contents : "Les Corrivaux, et le Negromant, Comedies tirees de l'Italien d'Arioste" [in fact, only Le Negromant is from Ariosto; cf. chapter I, i above]. Ff. 65-98v Les Corrivaux, comedie; f. 99 a sonnet by Jacques de la Taille; ff. 99v-142 Le Negromant, comedie de M. Louis Arioste, nouvellement

¹ According to De Maulde, Ouyres de Jean de la Taille, vol. 3, p. 1, the two plays first appeared in 1574. No 1574 edition is known.

mise en François, par Jehan de la Taille de Bondaroy. Bound together, in the Arsenal copy, with other works by Jean and Jacques de la Taille, dated 1572 and 1573; privilege 18 October 1570.

———, do., Rouen. Du Petit Val, 1602 (Bibliothèque de Versailles). The same note on the reverse of the title-page; the same titles and foliation.

Lavardin, Jacques de, La Celestine fidèlement repurgée, et mise en meilleure forme par Jacques de Lavardin ..., Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, n.d. [1578]. No privilege (Bibliothèque Nationale).

———, La Celestine tragicomédie, Traduit [sic] d'Espagnol en François ... Dernière édition. Rouen, Claude le Villain, 1598 (Bibliothèque Nationale).

Le Loyer, Pierre, Erotopégie, ou passetemps d'amour. Ensemble une Comédie du Muet insensé. Paris, Abel l'Angelier, 1576 (British Museum). Ff. 64-103v Le muet insensé.

———, Les œuvres et meslanges poetiques de Pierre le Loyer Angerin Ensemble, la Comédie Nephelococugie, ou la Nuee des Cocus, non moins docte que facétieuse. Paris, Jean Poupy, 1579. Privilege 1 August 1578. (Oxford, Bodleian Library; British Museum; Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal). Ff. 122v-160v, Le muet insensé. Ff. 161-238 La comédie Nephelococugie, ou la Nuee des Cocus. Nephelococugie bears the date 1578, but to judge from the continuous pagination and the title page of this edition, was probably not issued separately.

Maupas, Charles, see Turnèbe.

Mesmes, Jean-Pierre de, La comédie des supposez de M. Louys Arioste, en Italien et François. Paris, Estienne Groulleau, 1552. Privilege 30 September 1549 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal).

———, Comedie des supposez de M. Louys Arioste, Italien et Francois. Pour l'utilité de ceux qui desiront sçavoir la langue Italienne. Paris, Hierosme de Marnef, et la veufve de Guillaume Cavellat, 1585 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal). The same, re-issued with a new title-page. Cf. chapter I, ii above.

Papillon, Marc de [Le capitaine Lasphrise], Les premieres œuvres poetiques du Capitaine Lasphrise. Paris, Jean Gesselin, 1599. 2 vols. Privilege 31 January 1597 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal). La nouvelle tragicomique, vol. 2, pp. 635-57.

Perrin, François, Sichem ravisseur. tragedie extraite du Genese trente quatriesme Chapitre. Par François Perrin Autunois. Paris, Guillaume Chaudiere, 1589.¹ No privilege (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; no other copy known). No foliation before Sichem itself. The dedication of Les escoliers to Jacques Arthault is on f. [10], that is, preceding Sichem but nevertheless not applicable to it. A sonnet by Arthault on f. [7] appears to suggest that Perrin had also translated the Jephthes of Buchanan. Les Escoliers comedie, ff. 41-73v, is not referred to on the title-page of this edition, nor has it a separate title-page. Les escoliers is not included in the 1606 edition of Sichem: Sichem ravisseur, ou la circoncision des incirconcis Tragedie. Par François Perrin Autunois. Rouen, Raphaël du Petit Val, 1606 (British Museum).

Troterel, Pierre, sieur d'Aves, Les corrivaux comedie facetieuse de l'invention de P.T.S.D. [Pierre Troterel Sieur d'Aves]. Rouen, Raphaël du Petit Val, 1612. No privilege (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal).

———, Gillette. comedie facetieuse. Par le sieur D. [D'Aves]. Rouen; David du Petit Val, 1620. No privilege (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal).

¹ La Vallière, Bibliothèque, p. 286, gives 1586, not 1589; thus also Cioranescu, Bibliographie ...; P. Lacroix in his 1866 edition of Les escoliers; and Lebègue, Tableau, p. 331. Charmasse, François Perrin, showed that this was an error and that no 1586 edition is known; nor have I found such an edition.

Turnèbe, Odet de, Les contens comedie nouvelle en prose Francoise. Paris, Felix le Maignier, 1584. Privilege 16 September 1584 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal).

——, Les Desguisez. Comédie Francoise. Avec L'explication des Proverbes et mots difficiles. Par Charles Maupas. Blois, Gauché Collas, 1626. A second edition of Les contens, without mention of the name of Turnèbe (cited from Spector's edition of Les contens, pp. xiii-xiv. Copies in the Bibliothèque Nationale and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal).

Vivre, Gerard de, Comedie de la fidelite nuptiale Composé [sic] par Gerard de Vivre Gantois. Maistre d'escole à Colongne. Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1577. No privilege (British Museum).

——, do., Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1578 (Bibliothèque Nationale).

——, Comedie des amours de Theseus et Dianira. Composé [sic] par Gerard de Vivre Gantois. Maistre d'escole à Colongne. Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1577. No privilege (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal). Dedicatory note dated 24 May 1577.

——, do., Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1578 (Bibliothèque Nationale).

——, Trois comedies francoises. De Gerard de Vivre Gantois. La premiere, Des Amours pudiques et loyales de Theseus et Dianita [sic]. La seconde, De la fidelite nuptiale d'une honeste Matrone envers son Mari et espoux. Et la troisieme, Du Patriarche Abraham et sa servante Agar. Le tout pour l'utilite de la jeunesse et usage des escoles francoises, reveu et corrigé par Ant. Tyron. Rotterdam, Jean Waesbergue, 1589. No Privilege. The dedication, slightly and clumsily altered to fit all three plays, is the same as that of the 1577 edition of the Amours de Theseus et Dianira, and is still dated 24 May 1577 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal).

——, do., [slight orthographical difference in title], Anvers, Guislain Janssens, 1595. Privilege 15 November 1589 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal).

——, do., [do.], Anvers, Guislain Janssens, 1602 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; copy lacks the last few pages : all after Abraham V, v).

3. Comedies supposed to have been printed, but now lost.

Bourgeois, Jacques, Comedie tres elegante, en laquelle sont contenues les amours recreatives d'Erostrate ... et de la belle Polimneste ..., Paris, Veuve Jeannot, 1545. Title given by La Vallière, Bibliothèque, III, p. 243. The very precision of the title gives an assurance that a copy was known to La Vallière, but none is known today. An adaptation or translation of Ariosto's I Suppositi.

4. Other comedies supposed to have existed in manuscript, but now lost.¹

Amboise, François d' : three comedies besides Les Neapolitaines. The preface to Les Neapolitaines refers to "les comedies qu'il faisoit en la prime-vere de son adolescence" and which were acted : "sur le theatre elles avoient esté veües et receües avec un plaisir indicible", and to "plusieurs belles pieces" which might be published later. La Croix du Maine is more precise : in his list of works by d'Amboise, he cites "Trois Tragedies, quatre Comedies" (Bibliothèque, p. 87).

¹ I have not included in this section references to plays called simply "comédie" such as the "plusieurs comédies en français" of Antoine Forestier (cf. Lebègue, Tableau, p. 292); the term is of such general application that it covers many kinds of dramatic production other than strict comedies. References of this kind are given in full in . Lebègue's Tableau.

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Avost, Hierosme d' : a comedy entitled Les deux courtisanes, translated or adapted from Loys Domenichi. This comedy, according to La Croix du Maine (Bibliothèque, I, 373) was ready for printing in 1584; but no copy of it is now known, so that it appears not to have been printed.

Baïf, Jean-Antoine de : adaptations (on the lines of Le brave?) or translations (on the lines of L'eunuque?) of Terence's Heautontimorumenos and Aristophanes' Plutus (Du Verdier, Bibliothèque; cf. Lebègue, Tableau, pp. 294 and 301). Claude Binet, in his Vie de Ronsard, states that Ronsard translated the Plutus while at the Collège de Coqueret, where it was acted; M. Lebègue suggests, very plausibly, that the two translations of the Plutus are one and the same, possibly made by Baïf and Ronsard in collaboration.

Bourrée, Michel, sieur de La Porte : two or more comedies. According to La Croix du Maine, he wrote several tragedies and comedies in French (Bibliothèque; cf. Lebègue, Tableau, p. 295).

Chateauvieux (Cosme la Gambe) : two comedies entitled Le capitaine Bouboufle and Jodés (Du Verdier, Bibliothèque; cf. Lebègue, Tableau, p. 296).

Grévin, Jacques, La Maubertine : see Appendix B.

Hardy, Alexandre, Le jaloux and possibly other comedies. Le jaloux was a comedy written by Hardy and sold by him to the troupe of Pierre Le Messier on 19 September 1625 for the sum of 100 livres tournois. For the evidence concerning this and possibly other comedies by Hardy, cf. S.W. Deierkauf-Holsboer, "La vie d'Alexandre Hardy, Poète du Roi", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 91 (1947), 384-401; Les ramonneurs, ed. A. Gill, Paris, 1957, pp. lviii-xviii.

Jodelle, Etienne, La rencontre. E. Balmas, in his edition of L'Eugène, pp. 6-8, has shown that the identification of L'Eugène with La rencontre, first made by the Frères Parfaict (Histoire du théâtre français, III, Paris, 1745, p. 290), is an error. La rencontre

was a separate comedy, acted together with the tragedy Cléopâtre in 1553, and now no longer extant.

Larivey, Pierre de; three comedies. The title page of the 1611 edition of La constance, Le fidelle and Les tromperies, implies that these are only three out of six further plays by Larivey : Trois comedies des six dernieres de Pierre de Larivey Champenois. The dedication to Francois d'Amboise confirms this. Three others, therefore, may be presumed to have existed, but were never printed.

La Taille, Jacques de; one or more comedies. Jean de la Taille, in his Saül le furieux, Paris, Federic Morel, 1572, f. 70, writes of his late brother Jacques that he wrote "comme moy (selon le vray art, et la façon antique) Poèmes entiers, Tragedies et Comedies, en l'âge de 16, 17 et 18 ans", and that among his papers he found five tragedies and one comedy. In the same volume, a number of works by Jacques de la Taille are printed, with a title page (f. 74) by Jacques de la Taille himself where he says that he may afterwards publish his "Tragedies, Comedies et autres poèmes nouveaux".

Laudun, Pierre de, d'Aigaliers: one comedy. In his Art Poétique François, Paris 1597, V, i, he writes : "J'ay faict quelque comedie que l'on pourra voir, si je la mets chez l'imprimeur, toutesfois je n'en suis guere en deliberation. Plaute et Terence en ont faict en Latin lesquelles on pourra veoir et qui serviront de patron." The mention of Plautus and Terence immediately after mention of his "comedie" suggests that the play was a genuine comedy and that the word "comédie" is not used in the more general sense of "play".

Le Breton, Gabriel: two or more comedies, one of which was entitled Le ramonneur. La Croix du Maine, Bibliothèque, I, 143, writes of "plusieurs autres tragedies et comedies Françaises" by him; Du Verdier, Bibliothèque, p. 429, mentions only one comedy and that entitled Le Ramonneur. Cf. Les ramonneurs, ed. A. Gill, Paris, 1957, p.x.

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Pontoux, Claude de: three comedies. Du Verdier states that he left in manuscript "deux tragedies et trois comedies, accommodees sur les Histoires de nostre temps" (Bibliothèque of. Lebègue, Tableau, p. 294).

Ronsard: see Baif.

Turnèbe, Odet de: manuscript copies of Les contens, made from the 1584 edition. "Plusieurs s'en sont fait avec grand labour des copies à la main", writes Charles Maupas in his Epître to the 1626 edition of the play (see section 2 above).

Vivre, Gerard de: The dedication of the 1577 edition of Les amours de Theseus et Dianira calls the play "une Comedie des premieres de ma composition", suggesting that he may have written others besides this and La fidelité nuptiale (also published in 1577).

5. Modern editions.

Items marked ++ are those used and cited in the text of this thesis without further precision.

Collections:

Ancien Théâtre Français, ou Collection des œuvres dramatiques les plus remarquables depuis les Mystères jusqu'à Corneille, ed. Viollot-le-Duc, vols. IV-VII, Paris, P. Jannet, 1854-6. Jodelle, L'Eugène, IV, 5-81; Grévin, Les esbahis, IV, 223-333; Belleau, La recongne, IV, 335-438; ++Larivey's nine plays, V, 1- VII, 105; Turnèbe, Les contens, VII, 107-231; d'Amboise, Les Neapolitaines, VII, 233-333; ++Codard, Les desguisez, VII, 335-462; ++Papillon [Le capitaine Lasphrise], La nouvelle tragi-comique, VII, 463-91.

Le théâtre français au XVIe et au XVIIe siècles, ou choix des comédies les plus curieuses antérieures à Molière, ed. E. Fournier, Paris, 1871, 8° (reprinted in two 16mo volumes,

Paris, 1872). Jodelle, L'Eugène, 1-24; Belleau, La reconnue, 25-54; Larivey, Les esprits, 55-89; Turnèbe, Les contens, 90-131; ++d'Amboise, Les Neapolitaines, 132-65; ++ Perrin, Les escoliers, 166-91; Montluc, La comédie de proverbes, 192-227; Du Peschier, La comédie des comédies, 235-56; Du Ryer, Les vendanges de Suresnes, 319-47; Mairet, Les galanteries du Duc d'Ossonne, 373-99.

Separate editions:

++Anon, La Tasse, ed. P.L. Jacob, Recueil de pièces rares et facétieuses, vol. III, Paris, 1873.

Baif, Jean-Antoine de, Ouvres, ed. Ch. Marty-Laveaux, vol. III, Paris, 1886 (Le brave, pp. 183-373).

++Belleau, Remy, Ouvres poétiques, ed. Ch. Marty-Laveaux, 2 vols., Paris, 1878 (La reconnue, vol. 2, pp. 355-451).¹

Bruno, Giordano, Il Candelaio; reprinted, together with the 1633 adaptation Boniface et le pédant, in Il Candelaio di Giordano Bruno Boniface et le pédant comédie en prose imitée de l'Italien de Bruno Nolano, ed. V. Imbriani, Naples, 1886.

Corneille, Pierre, ++ Mélite, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre, Lille and Geneva, 1950.

Grévin, Jacques, Théâtre complet et poésies choisies, ed. L. Pinvert, Paris, 1922 (La tresorière, 51-113; Les esbahis,

¹ The so-called Ouvres complètes of Belleau, ed. A. Gouverneur, 2 vols., Paris, 1867, do not include La reconnue.

115-217). Cf. also P.R. Auguis, Les poètes françois depuis le XIIIe siècle jusqu'à Malherbe, Paris, 1824 (La trésorière, vol. V, 203-76).

+Jodelle, Etienne, L'Eugène, ed. E.H. Balmas, Turin, 1955.

++La Taille, Jean de, Œuvres, ed. R. de Maulde, 4 vols., Paris, 1878-82 (Les corrivaux and Le négromant are in the volumes entitled Comédies, 1879, pp. III - CVI and CVII - CCXXVII respectively).

++Le Loyer, Pierre, La Néphéloococugie ou la Nuée des cocus, comédie, ed. G. Brunet], Turin, 1869 (limited edition of 100 copies). Neither of Le Loyer's plays is in Œuvres poétiques de Pierre le Loyer, ed. M.J. Turquais, Angers, 1934.

Perrin, François, Les Escoliers, ed. P. Lacroix], Brussels, 1866 (limited edition of 106 copies).

++Turnèbe, Odet de, Les Contens, ed. N.B. Spector, 2nd edn., Paris, Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1964.

6. Modern adaptations.

Camus, Albert, Les Esprits comédie adaptation en trois actes par Albert Camus, Paris, Gallimard, 1953. Adapted from Larivey's Les esprits; written in 1940, acted in 1946 in Algeria, remodelled for the Festival d'art dramatique d'Angers, 1953.

Philippon, Gustave, La Trésorière, L'Ideale-Revue, 25 November 1911. An adaptation in three acts of Grévin's La trésorière.

7. Secondary sources

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ACTE PREMIER.

SCENE I.

LOYS, RICHARD.



T bien Richard, quelle nouvelle
Apportes-tu de ma Cruelle?
Veut-elle d'ocq'ue estre tousiours
Ainsi paoureuxse en ses amours?

Richard.

Mōsieur je croy que la pauvre etre
Sans aucun repos nous souhaite
Entre ses bras, moulez vo^s mieux?

Loys.

Je pense moy que tous les Dieux
Prennent plaisir en mon martyre:
~~Ineffablement mon mal empire,~~ Car ie voy mon mal qui
Sans toutesfois auoir est neur que ie voye en ce fortin
~~Dispaier mon amour vainqueur~~ *Moyen d'un tel amendement*

Richard.

Non non, monsieur, n'ay esperance
Que vous en aurez iouissance
En peu de temps: Laissez moy faire
C'est mon office, dont ie fere *Et croyez que pour vous c'est*
~~En fere si bien mon deuoir.~~ *l'en feray - c'est*

Loys.

Ouy, mais tousiours le uain espoir *Tu dis bien, mais*
Trompe ma trop grande constance
Au malheur de mon impuissance. *Et me redonne d'*

Richard.

Vrayment une telle beausé
A bien un amant merité:

*Lui plein d'une flamme si amoureuse
Serue sa pauvre dame rigoureuse*

297

LES
NEAPOLITAINES,
COMEDIE FRANÇOISE
RACINEUSE.

*Sur le subiect d'une Histoire d'un
Parisien, un Espagnol, & un
Italien.*

*par François d'Amboise Parisien
Avocat à la Cour du Parlement.*



A PARIS,
Pour Abel l'ANGELIER, au
premier Pillier de la grand
Salle du Palais.

AVEC PRIVILEGE DV ROY.

1584.

8° B L 14. 478

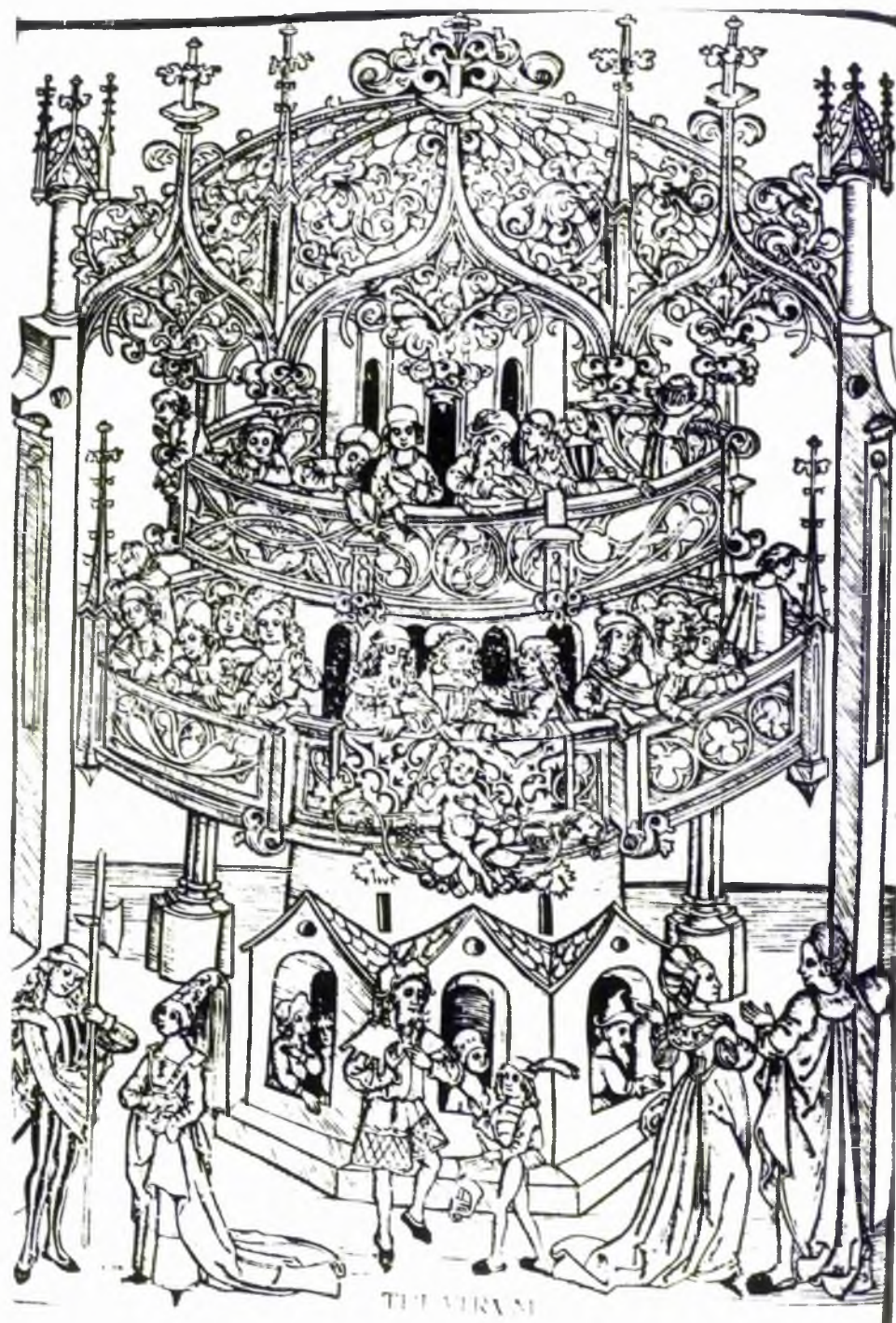


Fig. 3. Woodcut in De Witt's edition of "De Witt," 1493, showing the whole theatre. Cf. pp. 37 ff.

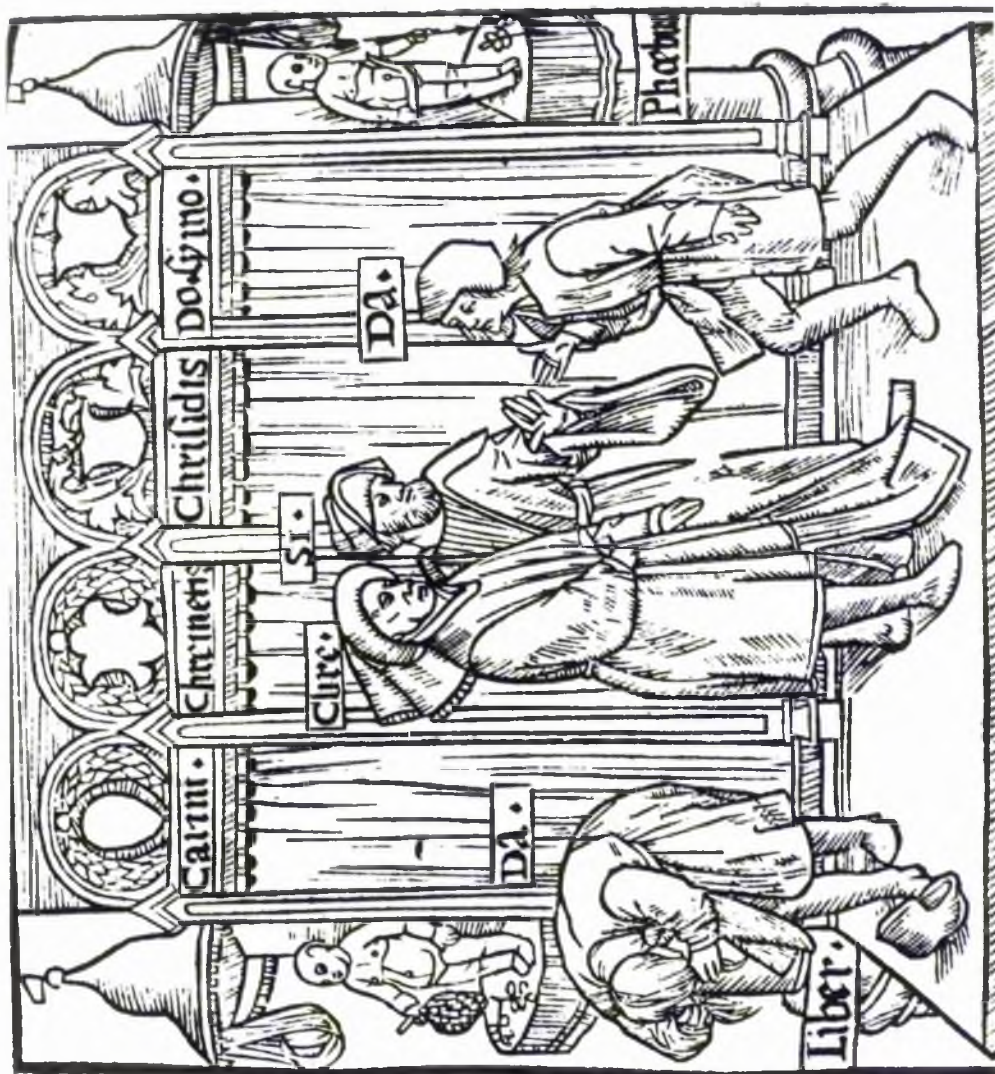


Fig. 1. Theatrical stage set, showing compartments in a line.

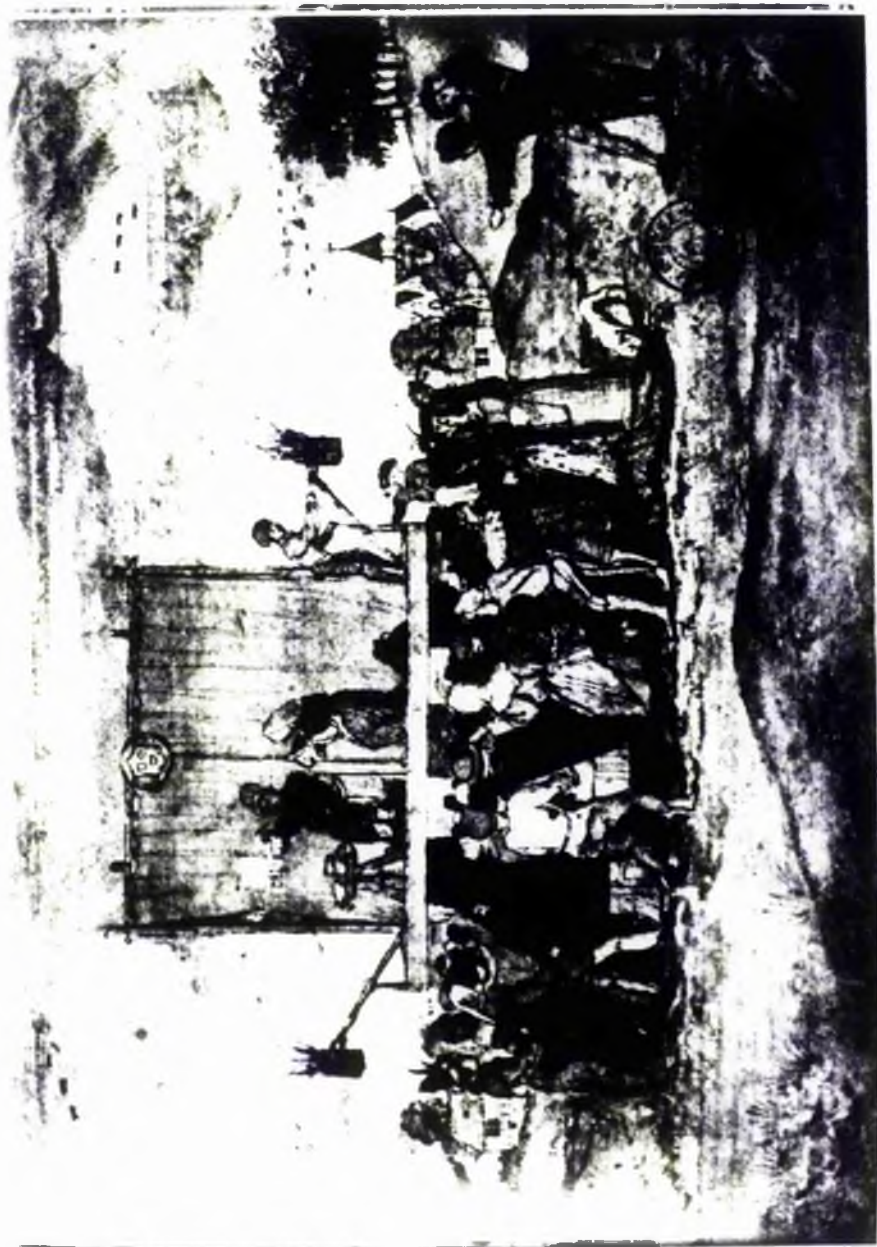


Fig. 6. Jean-air far... 16th... Cabral, Bibliothèque
Médiévale, t. 116, p. 53, 54, pp. 55-7.



Fig. 7. Open-air dance steps: detail of painting by V. Belton, Nijmegen, 1915-16.



Fig. 130. A FRENCH CHARLATAN STAGE, WITH THE FIGURES OF POLICHINELLE AND BRIGANTIN

Fig. 131. French stage, showing actors of the medicine 'L'Arvieten',
 from the 'Bibliothèque de la ville de Paris', 'L'Arvieten', vol. 1,
 p. 341, fig. 131.

48 COMP. DE RHETOR.

89

*A Dieu mon Roy, & Reine, & mes Amis
Pour vous obey ie m'en vay à Paris.*



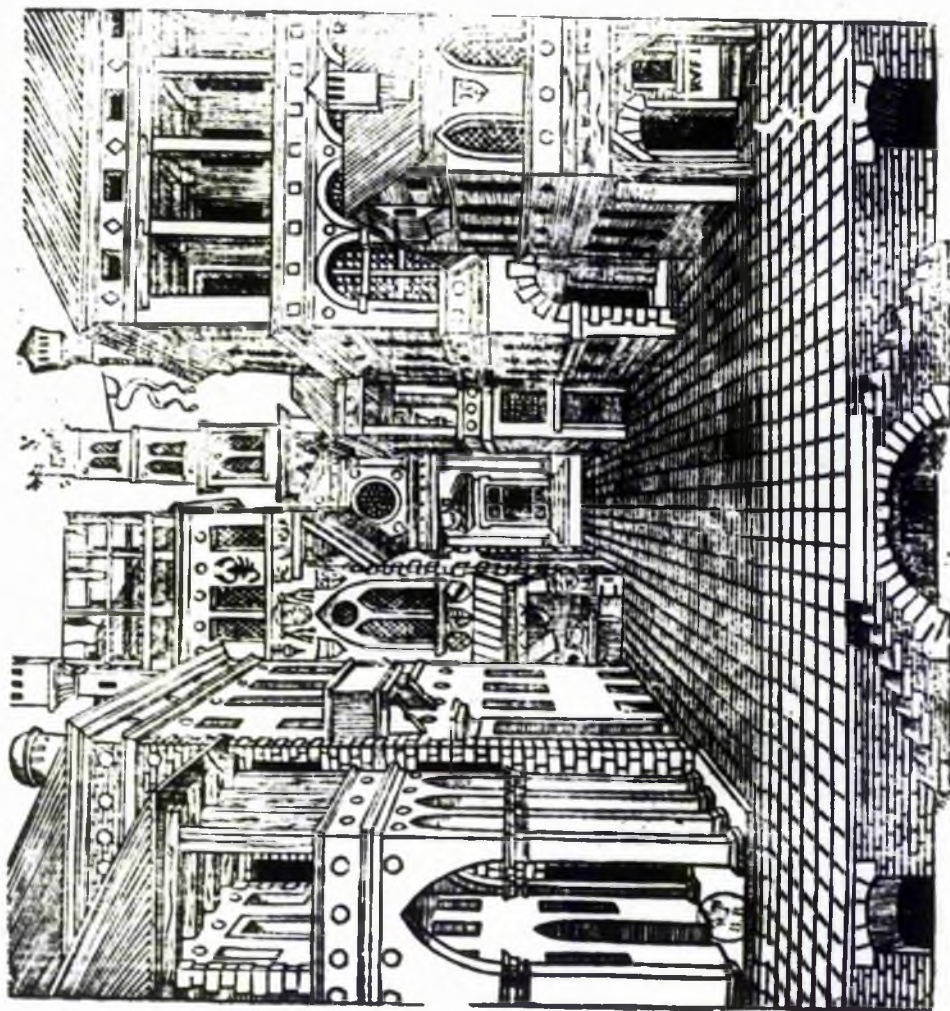
*Table des Matières des Propositions de
Rhétorique, Lyon, 1501.*



Fig. 10. Painting in the National Museum, Stockholm, derived from a print in the Recueil Fossard, showing 'Il capitano Cocodrillo', that is Fabritio de Fornaris, overhearing. Cf. pp. 51-2 and 249.



Fig. 11. Illustration of the set for the 'Festivals de la Passion de Valenciennes' (1917), showing set-rate compartments in a single line.



La décor comique.

Les deux illustrations de cette page sont dues à la plume de M. J. G. de la Haye, architecte à Paris.

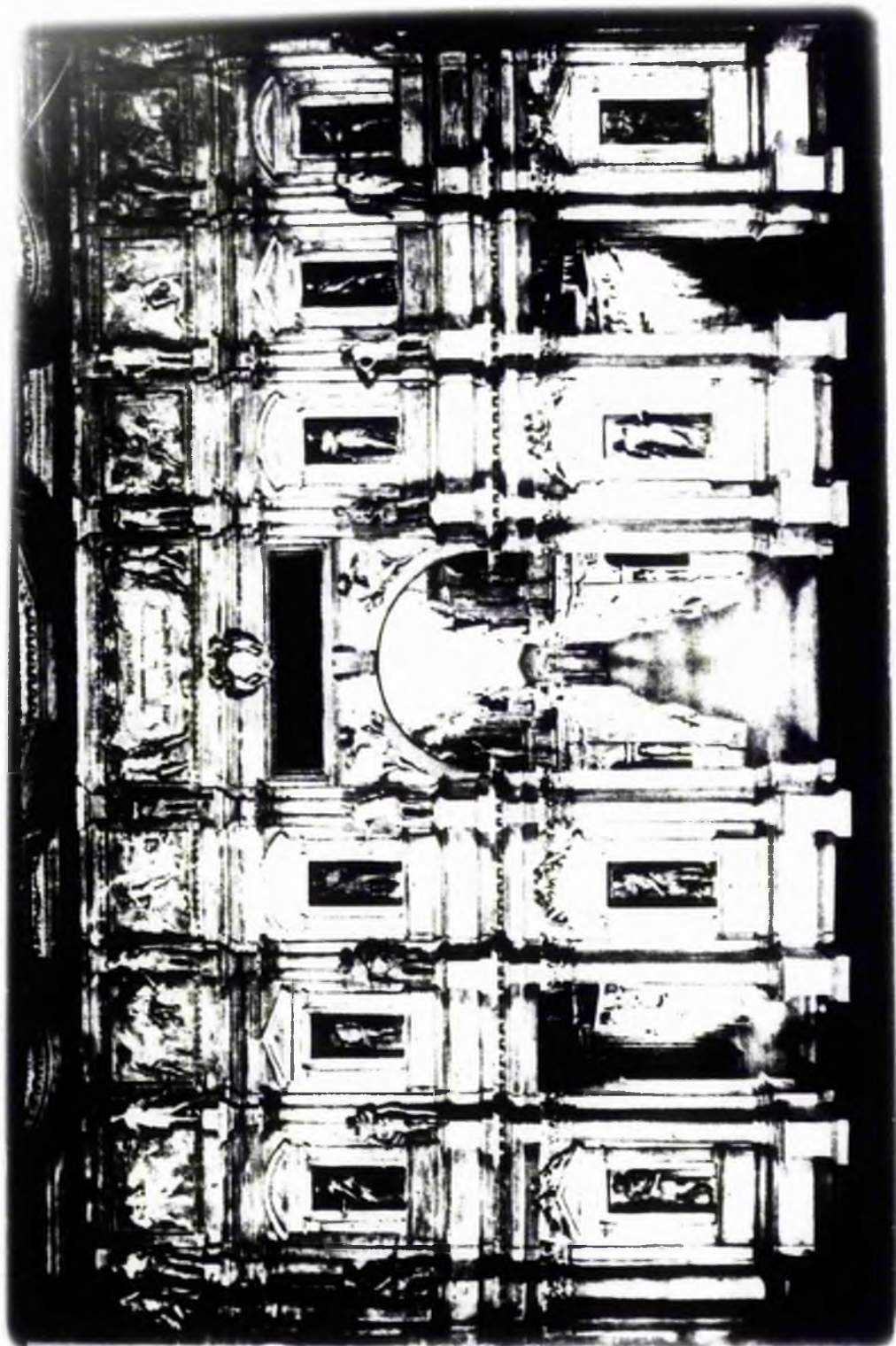
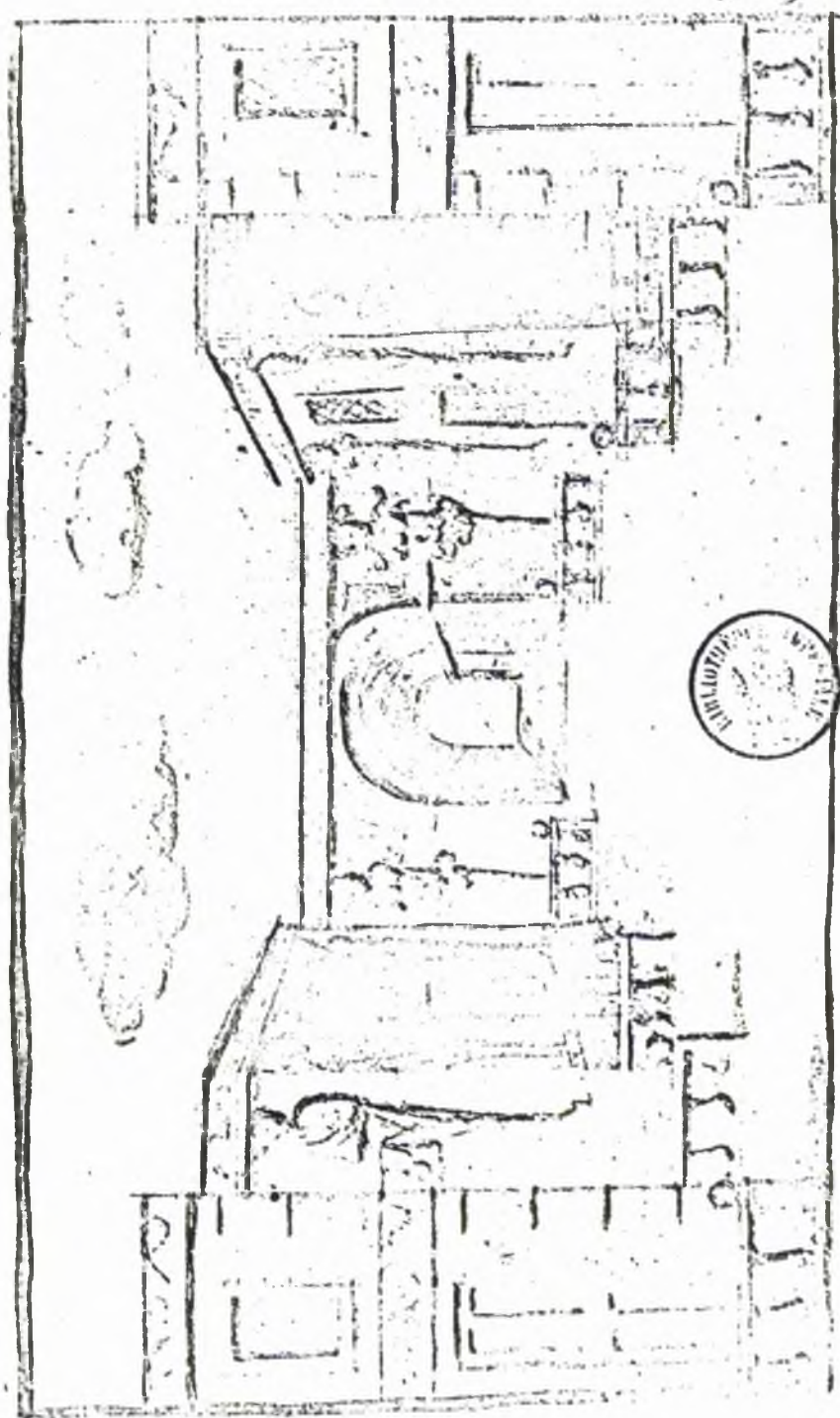


Fig. 12. The interior of the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. The statue of Abraham Lincoln is in the center of the hall.

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COOPERATION DES ARCHIVES DE

1921-1922

Harlequin. Zany Corneto. Il Segnor Pantalon.



200 O la belle chanfon, Pantalon chantons bien,
Si voulez égarer vostre maistrresse belle,
C'est le moyen certain pour en finir d'elle,
Qu'être musfau de chien, dy-je musicien.

Accouillons nous tous trois, si bien & proprement
Que puissions l'endormir au doux son de ma lre,
Encoeur que comme vous ne n'aye après à lre,
Le ne laillez pas de respect brayement.

Courageons l'amitié charnè le dèfies,
De ce plantin m'coûr, ofe pour malin,
La douceur de m'coûr, ofe pour malin,
Mes paffages m'font m'coûr m'coûr.

Zany Cometo.

Harlequin.

La Dona Lucretia.



C'est de piteux hommes nous puis qu'il se faut riper,
Qui s'égareront quand en ma forme colere:
Le cours en va comme une arpege en bouger,
Et l'un grand Capitaine ains que son mon pite,

Madame, se vous priez que le suis armer,
Que me laissez aller contre mon adversaire,
Le se ferai mourir, s'il n'a le corps charmé:
Venez piteux plaire à me le voir de faire.

Harlequin, ne bouger, votre pain se fera,
Ce sordain de par moi, qu'il se soit que s'il se,
Mettez l'attention d'argent vous en sera,
Et ne l'aura plus l'attention de la balle.